

THE ARGOSY.

JULY, 1899.

THE TOWER GARDENS

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

"ARTHUR BAYLISS!"
"John Harbuckle!"

But there was neither surprise nor alarm in either voice, nor in the eyes of either of the men as they looked each other steadily in the face by the light of the flaring gas-jet in the uncouth Tower Subway.

"How long have you come back from the dead?" asked John Harbuckle, with his usual slow and distinct utterance.

"I returned to London early in April," said Arthur Bayliss. "We can't talk in this hole. Are you going to Tower Hill? I will go with you."

Without another word they went on through the narrow Subway. There was only room for one passenger, Arthur Bayliss therefore went on first, John Harbuckle following close behind, as if he had him in charge.

The whole scene was weird, strange, and unreal to both of them. The magnified sounds were more hideous than ever.

They both paused at the top of the corkscrew stairs, and were again in the fresh air and on Tower Hill.

"They are with you?" asked Arthur Bayliss.

"Mary and the girls?—yes. How do you know?" said John Harbuckle, with hesitation. He was debating with himself whether he should ask Bayliss home or not.

"I saw you with them," returned Bayliss abruptly. Conversation was difficult between these two men.

"You returned in April. Why did you not come to me?" asked John Harbuckle, after an awkward pause.

"It was not an easy thing to do," said Bayliss.

John Harbuckle looked keenly at him. He had eyes that saw as well as looked; distinctly the eyes of an observer, deep-set, and penetrating. There was Bayliss, still handsome, well-dressed, and apparently prosperous, and yet he had found it difficult to call upon his friends.

John Harbuckle thought he would not ask him home just yet.

From the entrance of the Subway to the gate opposite the bonded warehouses is but a few yards.

"We can't talk here; shall we go in there?" said John Harbuckle, pointing to the gardens.

Bayliss hesitated for a moment.

"As you will," he said, as if sternly assenting to the inevitable.

The two men crossed the road side by side. John Harbuckle unlocked the gate—they went in. The gardens were then quite deserted. The children and their maids were gone; the few people who stroll there of an evening had not yet come.

They had the place to themselves.

"You were not surprised to see me," said Arthur Bayliss, making a definite assertion.

"I was not," said John Harbuckle. They were then standing still on the gravel path beside the coping of the moat.

Speech did not come readily to either of the men at that time.

Bayliss was the first to speak.

"You were not unprepared to see me?"

"I was not."

It seemed they could get no further than these short questions and shorter answers. There was a dead pause before John Harbuckle added: "I had already heard your voice and recognised it. It must have been the night you arrived that I heard it. It was over there by the Mint."

"I landed at St. Katherine's docks. It was about ten at night."

"That was the time. The bugles had just sounded."

Then there was another pause. They moved on a few steps.

"It was a melancholy return," said Bayliss, after a while.

"Where did you come from?" asked John Harbuckle, in a tone of judicial inquiry.

"From the West Coast of Africa, *via* Lisbon," said Bayliss.

"You were, then, one of the few survivors of the wreck of the *Mellacoorie*?" asked Harbuckle.

"I was never on board the *Mellacoorie*."

"Never? Who then was the Arthur Bayliss who went down in her?" asked Harbuckle, with both surprise and suspicion.

"Heaven knows; I don't. It was not I!" said Bayliss.

"But the Liverpool address in the *Times*? It was your address."

"Then it was a mistake," said Bayliss.

"A mistake! A mistake that killed your wife! She wore widows' weeds for you, Arthur Bayliss! Such mistakes should not occur!"

And John Harbuckle's usually calm tones trembled and rose with an indignation he could not control.

"They should not," said Bayliss. "The bitterest pain in all my bitter life is the knowledge that that mistake occurred. My Jessie is with you. I saw you here with her a few days since."

"You must have a good memory!" said John Harbuckle grimly.

"Not a better one than yours appears to be," said Bayliss.

Again they paused and walked on.

"Before we speak of Jessie, I should like to know the cause of your long absence and silence," said John Harbuckle.

"Harbuckle," said Bayliss, with evident pain and difficulty, "once, at a crisis in my life, I took a terribly false step—I turned aside when I should have gone straight on."

"You evaded your creditors?"

"Am I obliged to tell you all?" asked Bayliss, speaking with still deeper pain and difficulty.

"I never force a confidence," said Harbuckle; "but something is due to me under the circumstances."

"The truth is my health is so shattered that it is all but impossible for me to dwell on some subjects," said Bayliss hurriedly; then more calmly he went on: "I have stayed out of England until the Statute of Limitation has paid all my debts. I am in business again now; I may some day be able to make things square. I hope so; I am doing better than I had any right to anticipate. Let us bury the past and start anew."

He held out his hand as he spoke. John Harbuckle hesitated.

Jessie's mother, as he had last seen her, stood in his imagination between him and that outstretched hand. Then he told himself that after all she was Arthur Bayliss's wife and not his, that he had no right even to protect her against her husband; that she was at peace now; that she would wish him and that other man to be friends.

"Bayliss," he said, trying hard to speak calmly, but failing, "there is and there always must be *one* between us. I saw her not long before she died; I can never forget how she looked. She is in heaven now. God forgive you if you wronged her!" He held out his hand, Bayliss shook it; and they walked along side by side in silence.

"And Jessie?" presently asked Bayliss.

"She is with us. She is the light of our household, and makes life pleasant to all of us. She has—they have not been with me long; only long enough for me to grow fond—for me to see how bright she makes my sombre old home."

"My brother James took care of her, I suppose?"

"Yes, she has been well cared for always, poor child!"

"I felt he would—I felt you all would, or—I suppose I should have acted differently. James, I saw by the papers, came in for a considerable legacy, which would have been mine, had the old

man who left it him known I was living. It went the way of all poor James's money?"

"Yes, Mary and her daughter have nothing but their wretched little pensions, and, with a good deal of difficulty, I've managed to save the Scotch place; that brings them in a trifle. I hardly like to say it, but, as far as we can see, poor James died just in time to save them from absolute ruin. Of course I could do nothing while he was alive."

"Of course not; I lost a good deal by him myself, at various times. I should like to see Jessie."

"Jessie is excessively nervous; she is of a peculiarly sensitive organisation; it will not do to be too sudden with this news, I could not answer for the result. I will go home, and endeavour to prepare her mind a little, and then, perhaps——"

"I'll wait here; you'll be as quick as you can?"

"I will."

They walked in silence back towards the gate. No two men could have looked more dissimilar. As they went side by side along the straight path above the moat, they offered a very striking contrast.

John Harbuckle was aware of it, aware then, as he had always been, that the tall, handsome man, with the long eye-lashes, and expressive eyes, had most decidedly the advantage over him in point of appearance; for he himself had never quite attained even the medium height, and now he stooped habitually. His scanty locks, too, were quite grey, while Bayliss possessed thick hair, that showed still some of the original brown.

The fact was, John Harbuckle was some years older than his rival. As he walked slowly along by that rival's side, he felt again as he had often felt before, that he never had had a chance after Arthur Bayliss had come upon the stage.

It was in that very place, twenty-four years ago, that he and Bayliss had first met.

It was on just such an evening. The trees had grown a good deal since then; the garden was greener and fuller now, but all else looked much the same. He recalled it vividly, and so did Bayliss; although neither spoke of it, it seemed to each as if the other were remembering it.

John Harbuckle and his Jessie of Catherine Court had been sitting under the acacias nearly opposite the Beauchamp Tower. They had been engaged for some time. John Harbuckle was elder than she by ten years. They had been friends as long as she could recollect; he had always loved her, and she had been content that he loved her.

They were going to be married in a couple of months; they had been talking about where they should live; they both felt calmly happy, very contented, very secure.

James Bayliss and Mary Harbuckle had been walking up and

down the long, straight path on the east side of the gardens, while John and his Jessie had been talking under the acacias.

Presently Jessie thought of something she had forgotten to say to Mary. It seemed to her of importance.

"Let us go and look for them," she said, rising at once. She was always rather impetuous.

"Oh, not yet! Let us wait!" John had said, for he had been very happy, and was reluctant to break up the quiet talk.

But she would go at once; so he went with her. They walked past the Beauchamp Tower and the new Barracks, and so on to the long path above the little kitchen gardens down in the moat, among which a soldier and his lass were strolling amorously, just as another soldier and lass were doing now, and where the great dock wall was frowning down on the path, just as now, and there they saw Mary Harbuckle and James, and, for the first time, *James's brother*.

The three saw them and walked leisurely to meet the two.

"That must be Arthur Bayliss with them. He has just come, then! They were expecting him," said John Harbuckle's Jessie.

When they came near, John Harbuckle noticed that Arthur Bayliss was a very handsome young man. They were all young in those days.

It was not very long after that, that John Harbuckle had thought of hanging himself on the old lamp-rod in Catherine Court which faced the house where his lost Jessie used to live.

It seemed to both those men, as they walked side by side in those same gardens, as if it had all happened only yesterday, instead of four-and-twenty years ago. It all stood between them still.

At the gate they parted for the time; Arthur Bayliss turned again to the path above the moat, John Harbuckle towards his house in Trinity Square.

He went up that fatal hill, which so many a brave man has faced on his way to the block and axe, with a very grave countenance and a heavy heart.

"I bear him no grudge, I hope, for that," he said to himself. "I hope I do not. It was but natural, I suppose, that she should have preferred him; and they were both frank and honest, they hid nothing, they told me all; it was natural, I suppose. I ought not to bear him malice for it, and—I hope I don't. But—I can't forgive him for killing her! He did kill her; how, I don't know, but he did it! I've shaken hands with him. I mean the past shall be the past; but her face, as I last saw it, haunts me, and haunt me it always will. *He* never saw it as I saw it. But doubtless he's been punished enough. It is not for me to add to his punishment, and, God helping me, I will not. It will be hard to give him up his Jessie; it has been a great pleasure to me to see her mother's

daughter about the old house. She is a dear girl—a very dear girl.”

And John Harbuckle touched his eyes for a moment with his right hand forefinger.

Now while John Harbuckle and Arthur Bayliss had been in the Tower Gardens the little household in Trinity Square were wondering what could have become of him. He was usually very punctual; such a thing as for him to keep the dinner waiting a whole half-hour was, previous to this evening, unknown. Mrs. Robbins's successor, whose affections were with the military, and who was anxious for her “evening out,” sent up heart-rending accounts of the state of the fish; but still the master came not.

Mrs. Bayliss began to grow seriously anxious, looked out of the window as far as she could see, and at last gave the word of command to serve in five minutes.

“What can have become of Uncle John?” they all said.

“I thought he'd have taken me down Thames Street to show me the site of Castle Baynard,” said Alison aloud, adding to herself (for she feared to appear pedantic), “I looked up that story he told us, in the Guildhall Library to-day, and I've found several fresh items for him.”

As for Jessie, she was already discussing privately whether *the* dress should be white satin or white silk, and wondering what Mac was doing at Muirhead, and whether there would be a note for her to-morrow morning.

The girls were sitting in opposite corners of one of the window seats of the drawing-room. They were both wearing soft grey dresses with much lace around their throats and wrists. They made, together with the lace curtains and the bright flowers in the painted boxes, a very pretty picture; they looked so soft and gentle, sitting there together; for although in common arithmetic one and one make two, two girls, who harmonise well, seem to be, when together, of more value than they are as two separate items; therefore, it strikes me that one and one, as in this instance, may sometimes make more, and sometimes perhaps less, than two. You see you can't *group* one girl.

Mrs. Bayliss looked at her girls with a calm pleasure. Mrs. Bayliss's temper had been very good that day; the want of continual friction was slowly improving it. As she saw her girls sitting there together, she thought that two girls were most decidedly prettier than one.

“But”—hearing the clock strike—“dear, dear, dear me!” she cried, “what can have become of Uncle John? Look out of the window, Alison.”

“Ah! here he is, at last!” said Alison. “Creeping along as if he had the whole day before him. Oh, you naughty Uncle John!

Mother, how very grave he's looking!" She added this last remark as John Harbuckle came nearer.

"It's been a hot, tiring day," said Mrs. Bayliss; "I wonder he didn't come in rather earlier than later on such a day."

A minute or two afterwards they heard his slow step on the stairs. Mary went out to him.

"Why, John, how late!" she began.

"Mary, I want to speak to you," he interrupted, in a voice that at once compelled attention and awakened anxiety.

"Yes," she said, scanning his face eagerly.

"Come up to my den," he said. "The girls are in the drawing-room, I suppose."

They went up to one of the top rooms, which was crowded in a way that scarcely allowed space for two chairs.

"Sit down," he said, getting a chair out of a corner, and then taking his own, which was by an open desk:

"You remember the conversation we had the other night about Arthur Bayliss?" he began at once.

"Distinctly," said Mary, with a quick glance at her brother.

"And the face in the crowd?" asked John.

"The more I think of it, the more it recalls him to me," said Mary. "You have seen it somewhere else?"

"I have."

"Good Heavens, John! Is it possible he can be alive?"

"He is. I have seen him."

"Seen him! Where?"

"We met in the Tower Subway."

"John! you don't mean it? I can't believe it!"

"It's true, though. We have spoken."

"And did he recognise you, John? I can't believe it!"

"At once, but then anyone might recognise me here."

"And—and—how was he looking?" asked Mary, a thrill of pleasure stealing in among her surprise.

"Prosperous as to money matters; he's wretched enough, I fancy, in all else."

"My James's brother! Where is he?—where is he, John?" the delight gaining on the surprise.

"I left him in the Tower Gardens. He has stopped out of England until Time has paid his debts, and now he's come back. He wants to see Jessie."

"Of course, of course! He must see her at once, let's call the poor darling! How delighted she'll be!—she was always so fond of him. Let me go and fetch her. Or—I suppose we mustn't tell her too suddenly—what shall we do? I'm so glad, John! I *am* so glad! Ah, if Jessie's poor mother had been alive! But, John, what's he been doing with himself, and why didn't he let us know?—why didn't he let *her* know? Why didn't he tell his wife?"

"Perhaps he did," said John, very gravely.

"Then if he did—no, no, she would never—she *could* never—have helped him to do wrong! And yet—I said *it was remorse that killed her!*"

"Mary, never mention such an idea to anyone. Her name must be kept sacred. Never again let us allude to this even between ourselves. Remember, Mary, her name is sacred. What you have said must never be breathed again—not to any living creature."

"What will not a woman do for a man she loves?" said Mary fervently.

"Never mind! never allude to it again," said John, sternly. "But now, about Jessie. Tell her to get on her hat as quickly as she can."

"You must tell her something first. It would nearly kill her to see him suddenly."

"Trust that to me," said John. "I'll go and take a turn in Catherine Court; send her out to me there."

"Can't you bring him in to dinner presently? I'll have it kept."

"No, no! Never mind me, I'll take what comes."

Mrs. Bayliss ran downstairs at a rate that, had her mind been at sufficient leisure to notice, would have surprised even herself.

"Jessie," she said, putting her head inside the drawing-room; "come here, Jessie. Uncle John has brought you some wonderfully good news; he's gone out into Catherine Court. Put on your hat and run out to him there, he wants to talk to you."

Jessie sprang up, her eyes wide open with amazement.

"Good news! Good news for me! Why, what good news can he have for me? I never have any news!"

"Silly child, don't stand there talking, but get on your hat, and go out and hear it."

Jessie flew upstairs for her hat.

"I wonder, can he have seen Mac Carruthers? Can Mac have called?—or perhaps he knows of something better for him." And her fingers could hardly fasten her hat-strings for trembling.

"Good news! I can't imagine what it can be, unless—but that's nonsense—unless it's to do with Mac Carruthers! There's no one else it can be about!"

Hat and gloves were all she needed.

Down the stairs, past the swing door, now rosy in new red baize, along the hall and out into the street, over the pavement, under the old iron-work, round by the antiquated corner shop, and into the broad court between the two tall rows of early Georgian houses, she ran, and there, just by the horizontal lamp-rod and the curious gridiron-like arrangement against which last-century lamplighters had placed their ladders, was John Harbuckle standing, waiting for her.

He went a few steps to meet her flying form.

"Uncle John, Uncle John! what's the good news? Oh, make haste, Uncle John, I'm just mad for it," she cried.

"My dear child!" he said, and stopped, for the moment, unable to get any further.

"Why do you look so grave, if it's good news?" Jessie cried, a wave of sudden terror rushing over her, and she lifted up a face all quivering with hope and fear to his.

"It *is* good news, my dear," he said, greatly moved. "It *is* good news; so good that I'm afraid it will frighten you, as good news sometimes does; and yet, indeed Jessie, it need not frighten you, for it will make you very glad. Don't be frightened!"

"Very well, then, I won't! But—is it about Mac? About someone in Scotland?" She could not keep back the question, nor the blushes that went with it.

"About no one in Scotland," said he, with a grave, unsteady smile. "Jessie, do you remember Trinity Monday?"

"Ah, you have seen that face again?" she cried, with a wild terror in her voice.

"Take my arm, my dear," said Uncle John.

She took it; he placed her hand firmly upon it, and put his own hand over hers. They both walked slowly along the court.

"Tell me all you remember about your father's going away. You must have been about eleven years old then, I think?" asked John Harbuckle, in tones that tried to be calm.

"Oh, you've heard something about him! You have met a survivor of the dreadful wreck! Oh, Uncle John!—it was all so terrible! I feel as if I should die when I think of it."

"Did your mother ever tell you he was drowned?" asked John Harbuckle.

"I read it in the *Times*. Poor little mother! I'm sure it killed her!"

"Think now, Jessie, think and answer carefully; *did your mother ever tell you your father was shipwrecked?*"

"Oh, Uncle John, why do you talk about that dreadful time? It makes me shake all over only to think of it."

And indeed her hand was trembling so, that he pressed his own over it as if to still it.

"She told you, perhaps," he said, distinctly but with extreme solemnity, "that you were not to grieve too much, for that many people, who were thought to be lost at sea, had been picked up."

"Yes, she often said that," said Jessie; "and I have always read all the stories of shipwrecks I could find. When I was little, I often fancied my father would come back, but it's too long ago now."

"Haven't you read about people on desert islands, and that sort of thing?" asked Uncle John.

"He's come!" she cried; and although it was a warm summer evening her teeth chattered.

"I have heard that he is alive. Shall we go in, Jessie? Perhaps you'd better lie down and rest a little, before I tell you any more."

"Oh, no, no! Go on! Oh, go on!"

"He's been out in Africa, all this time. It is possible you may meet him some day in London."

"I have met him! I'm sure it was he I saw that day! Oh, why—why didn't mother know he was alive? Oh, Uncle John, she used to say such dreadful things! It drove her nearly mad, I think! She frightened me so much!—I can't get over it! It all comes back to me now!"

"Would you like to see your father, Jessie?"

"Oh, yes! Yes! Where is he? You know—I see you know!"

John Harbuckle was feeling very much afraid of her, she trembled so, and looked so wild. He did not know what best to do; perhaps, after all, it would be better to tell her at once.

"Yes, Jessie, I know where he is; I met him half an hour ago in the Subway. He is waiting for you in the Tower Gardens."

"Let me go!" Jessie exclaimed, turning at once, but in a strange, vague, overwrought way. John Harbuckle turned with her; he hastened his steps, but kept her fluttering hand firmly on his arm.

They went out of the court, down the hill to the gate opposite the bonded warehouses.

"See, there he is!" said John Harbuckle.

Jessie looked up with eyes brilliant with excitement to a tall figure half hidden by the trees. There was that in her face that quite unmanned John Harbuckle.

He unlocked the gate, stepped just within the Tower Gardens, then took the girl's quivering face within his own trembling hands, bent over it kindly, and kissed it.

"God bless you, Jessie!" he said huskily. Then he went outside the gate, locked it, gave her the key and turned slowly and sadly towards home.

"I did not know I had grown so fond of that dear girl!" said John Harbuckle; and the Tower Gardens grew very dim to him for a few moments.

Her father had come, but it was hard to give her up.

She had fluttered away from John Harbuckle; she was gone; he felt it was very hard to face Tower Hill and life without her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHAT THE BELL-TOWER SAW.

DARE we go further? Must we turn away with John Harbuckle, feeling that the meeting of the child and the long-mourned parent is too sacred for strangers' eyes to witness? Is it intrusion to enter the Tower Gardens?

Perhaps.

We to whom just now gates and moats and ballium walls are as nothing, why need we disturb them by our presence? Why may we not fly across the moat and perch somewhere out of their way, as soon as we have made up our minds that sympathy, and not mere idle curiosity, makes us wish to know what they will do and say?

Or shall we lose ourselves altogether? Shall we merge our identity into that of the old Bell-Tower at the opposite angle, the Bell-Tower whose quaint "look-out" seems now like a great bird-cage hanging in mid-air, sheer against the gentle sky of this summer evening? Yes, we will be for a while that Bell-Tower.

During the many centuries we have stood at that angle what partings we have witnessed! We saw Thomas More's noble Margaret force her way through crowd and barrier to her doomed father's arms, as down below, there, by the Traitors' Gate, he followed the axe-edge. We saw that scene—the massive ring to which they fastened the rope that kept back the crowd is still in the wall of our neighbour, the Bloody Tower—we saw that despairing embrace, and are we not to witness the happy meeting over yonder in our own Tower Gardens? We must see it.

So we look across the moat to the path among the trees. A girlish form flutters onwards, a man comes to meet her, there are outstretched arms, a cry, a sob, and the two figures are but as one.

After all the bitter farewells, who can blame us that we are glad?

A sudden shyness came over Jessie as she felt that John Harbuckle had left her.

For a moment she hesitated, faltered, but still went on. That tall man with the heavy beard was not quite like the father she remembered.

A faintness touched her, the gardens and the Tower grew misty to her. All she saw was the tall figure hurrying towards her.

They came nearer, he raised his hat, she caught his eyes, and knew he was indeed her father, ran to him and threw herself into his outstretched arms, where for a moment she seemed to lose all consciousness, although she did not faint.

He pressed her to him, kissing her again and again.

"Jessie!—Jessie!" between long pauses was all he could say.

The voice so well remembered and so unchanged penetrated her dazed brain. She lifted her head from his shoulder, and held up her face to his.

He saw how over-wrought she looked.

"Darling, darling! How I have frightened you!" he said, kissing the sweet face. "Come to that bench! Lean on me!" He led her the few steps, they sat down and she leaned against him, still clinging to him, but still hardly conscious.

"You are getting better?" he asked anxiously.

She muttered some faint, inarticulate sound. They sat still for some moments, and presently she cried a little with her face buried against his shoulder; while he could say nothing but "Jessie! Jessie!"

"You are better?" he asked again, after a while.

"Yes!" she said, with a long drawn sigh. "Oh, Poozie! why did you go away?" she asked, going back to the familiar childish name she used to give him in the days gone by; and in spite of the ashen grey tint that still lingered on her face and lips, a little bit of childish grace rushed back with it.

"Ah, Jessie! Jessie! how many and many a time have I heard you calling for your poor old daddie!" said he, his eyes filling with tears.

"Then why didn't you come?" she asked, still faintly.

"Because I couldn't! You don't believe anything else but dire necessity could have kept me away from you, do you?" he answered, with a certain pathetic wistfulness that was quite his own.

"Oh, no!" Jessie answered with decision; and then they were silent, and he stroked her hair and kissed it. "Have you been on a desert island all this time?" she asked presently, and she turned and looked at him with an interest that was almost childlike in its quaintness. The colour was returning to her face.

"Darling child, how lovely you've grown! No, Jessie, I've neither been shipwrecked nor been living on a desert island; but for all that I couldn't come back before; I couldn't, or I should have come."

"You don't look like a desert-islander," said Jessie, turning round to survey him the better.

Indeed Arthur Bayliss's carefully tended *personnel* suggested any other character rather than Juan Fernandez or Robinson Crusoe.

"Ah, I'm so glad you weren't shipwrecked!" Jessie went on. "I couldn't bear you to be shipwrecked!" and she shuddered.

"Couldn't you, darling? Ah, child, how much I've wanted you! Do you know I had a photograph of you and your mother with me; every night I've kissed them all these years; I don't think I've missed once, except when I've been too ill to know anything."

"Ah!" and in Jessie's murmur of sympathy there was the tenderest, most caressing love, and the most pitying tears.

"Dear child, how lovely you've grown!" her father exclaimed again. "Let me look at you well! To think I should own so much beauty! But"—scanning her brightening face—"best of all, darling—you've grown so like her, so like your mother."

"Ah! But do you know, I've seen *you* so often in the glass! That's why I knew you directly. Oh, do you know, I saw you—I've seen you before—dear father—oh, dear, dear father! I saw you one day—we were coming out of St. Olave's Church—there was a crowd—I was frightened—the service had been all about shipwrecks—I saw your eyes—I was sure they were your eyes, and I knew—I thought you were drowned—I was so frightened! And to think you were alive all the time! Oh!" and she broke down in a tumult of tears and laughter and kisses.

They could neither of them say anything more for a while, but presently he found words to tell her how he had seen her and watched her in those very gardens, and how he had not dared to speak to her, and had slunk back to his lodgings, and had been very ill, with none but strangers to tend him.

He never knew how he managed to tell her that.

"But why—why—why didn't you speak to me?" cried Jessie, with a dread of hidden wrong.

"I saw you were happy, child!"

"And were you *never* coming to me? *Never?*"

"I wanted everything to be pleasant for you first, darling."

Her face grew very grave.

"You shouldn't have waited for that. We needed *you* more than pleasantness," she said, with a gravity most unlike herself. And then her voice changed to tones of more acute distress. "Oh! if poor mother could only have known you were alive! How could you let her think you were dead? Oh!—it was too dreadful—it killed her. How could you let her be killed?"

He turned away, covering his eyes with his hand. For a few seconds he could not speak. Then he said in an authoritative, but broken-hearted tone:

"Jessie, you may be quite sure of one thing: your mother would have welcomed me back without a reproach. She knew how much I loved you both, she could have formed some idea of what agony it has cost me to be separated from you."

"Dear, dear father, I don't reproach you; only—oh! she would have been so glad!"

"Don't speak of it, Jessie; I can't bear it."

There was a long pause.

"Tell me about yourself. You are living with Aunt Mary at her brother's?" he asked, making a great effort to rouse himself.

"Yes; where are you living? Of course I'm coming to you. We can have a nice little house all to ourselves, somewhere, can't we? That is"—and, remembering Mac, she suddenly broke down.

"Ah, child! there are difficulties to be faced."

"I'll face them!" said Jessie bravely.

"Jessie, you've grown a real woman!"

He looked at her with fervent admiration.

"But we mustn't discuss troublesome things to-day," he added.
"Well, well, well, Jessie, how beautiful you've grown!"

"Beautiful? Oh, I'm so glad! I shouldn't like you to have come back and found me ugly; you don't mean it really, though; it's only because you're so glad to see me, and because you recognise likenesses in my face."

"Really, really, Jessie, I do," said he, in a lighter and brighter tone than he had yet used. It brought back to her the pleasant days before the great trouble came. "And so you are living with Aunt Mary, and you're very happy?"

"Yes; but, oh, father, such a winter in Scotland! It was dreadful! Aunt Mary's brother—he's such a good, kind old Uncle John——"

"Is he, though? And very fond of you?" interpolated Jessie's father, with perhaps a little more meaning than she quite understood.

"Oh, yes! So are they all. Uncle James—he was so like you—only—only, well, in some things he wasn't—he had a farm—some money was left him, and he would take a farm because he and Aunt Mary had been reading all sorts of horrid little books; and the crops would get spoiled, and the stock would die, and there never was enough of anything; and poor Uncle James was killed——"

"Killed?"

"Yes, that is, he thought he knew all about reaping machines, and he didn't; that was how it was. It was very terrible; and poor auntie broke her heart about him, I do believe. She's been quite different ever since. It was so dreary after he was dead—frightfully, frightfully dreary; you can't imagine how dreary!"

"Can't I? Why, I've been so dreary that I wonder I'm alive at all! But, Jessie"—and there came that pleasant recognisable light in his eyes that was quite his own—"it astonishes me to hear you say it was so dreary in Scotland. Were there no alleviations to that dreariness, eh?"—and he asked the question in so curious an accent that Jessie, having looked up and caught his expression, suddenly looked down and coloured.

"How do you know?" she asked demurely.

"No one but a Scotchman could have given that absolutely literal answer about the London and North Western the other evening," said Arthur Bayliss, smiling.

Jessie started, in charming confusion.

"You heard him, then?—you saw him when he came?"

"When he came tearing up to the railings?" he said. "Yes, I saw him, and you also—that was when I saw you. Ah, my darling!

it was very dreadful to me ; and yet I thanked God you were safe and happy. Come, Jessie, what's his name, and when is it to be—when are you going to be married ? Not soon, I hope ; it won't do to give you away as soon as I have found you."

"It's not to be for ever so long, not for six months yet," said Jessie. "His name is Mac—Mac Carruthers."

"And a very nice name, too ! Does he want to take you back to Scotland ?"

"We don't know ; it's all so uncertain at present ;" and she told him how matters stood.

"Ah ! I wish I had brought home a few stray thousands for you, darling !" said Arthur Bayliss, when he had heard Jessie's little story, which she managed to tell very prettily. "But perhaps it's all for the best ; I don't want to lose you yet. Who is that ? Can it possibly be Aunt Mary ?"

And there, indeed, was Mrs. Bayliss, who had borrowed a neighbour's key, hurrying towards them.

"Oh, Arthur ! I'm so glad !" she exclaimed, when they were within speaking distance, stretching out both her hands in welcome.

"So am I, Mary ! How are you ? Thank you for all your kindness to my Jessie ! She's all I could have wished her to be ! She's so unspoiled. Thank you ! Thank you !"

Then there was more weeping and rejoicing, and at last Arthur Bayliss was carried off in triumph by Jessie and her aunt to the house in Trinity Square, where a very savoury "fatted calf" (of which the lordly salmon was one ingredient) had been prepared to celebrate his return.

In vain Arthur Bayliss protested that he had already dined.

"It's no use, Uncle Arthur," said Alison, "without such a festival we could not think you were safe at home ! Without it you might again vanish ! Without it we could not think you were real !"

The five of them therefore sat down at the festal board with joy and wonder, and pretended to make a meal, Mrs. Bayliss doing the honours in a dazed bewilderment, Arthur Bayliss and his daughter sitting hand in hand, wondering that they should be together, their wonder growing every moment. Presently they all went into the drawing-room and sat round the open window in the deep twilight that was nearly as much darkness as would come that clear summer night.

Far off was heard the sound of street traffic not yet quite all gone ; it reached them only as the rushing of a river, like the Birren when not in spate. In a distant corner of the square a German band was playing popular Volkslieder, "Du ! Du"—"Blau blüht ein Blümelein !" The trees in the gardens stood absolutely still, not a leaf was moving ; the street-lamps shone in the atmosphere, singularly pure and sweet, that comes to London sometimes at twilight.

Mrs. Bayliss and Arthur and his daughter sat together and talked, still with a feeling of awe and mystery, about James, and Africa, and other days.

John Harbuckle wandered aimlessly about the room for a time; the quiet evening did not bring him peace. Presently, however, he went up to Alison and, putting his hand gently on her shoulder, he said under his voice:

"Come up to my den."

Alison was feeling as if in the way, so was glad to go. They went upstairs together.

"I bought some old Wedgwood a few days before you came here," said John Harbuckle. "If you wouldn't mind helping me, Alison, I'd wash it now. It's so dirty; I hardly know what it's like, but I fancy we shall find it very good. I rather think it will match that tray in the drawing-room. I don't seem to have had any time to look at it; so perhaps, if you don't mind, my dear, we had better do it now. Would you mind collecting the things we shall require? They—h'm—I don't think they want us downstairs just now."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ECHO IN CATHERINE COURT.

"THEY don't want us downstairs just now," said John Harbuckle to Alison, with a good deal of emphasis.

"They'll never need us any more," returned Alison; but without pausing an instant she went off to collect what was necessary for the cleaning of the Wedgwood.

John Harbuckle turned to the window, and looked out on the raven's twilight.

It was only a few evenings since that he had stood looking out on the same scene with his heart full of an almost paternal fondness for Jessie. He remembered pathetically how happy it had made him. That after-glow of the one romance of his life had all faded now, it seemed; he felt chilled and sad. "But she belongs to him—she belongs to him; she is his daughter—she is his by right of nature—so it must be—so let it be!" he said to himself.

He heard the murmur of voices from the drawing-room, he turned away and lighted his lamp.

When Alison came back, laden with all sorts of things, she found Uncle John with his coat off, his sleeves tucked up, and quite ready for work.

They spent nearly two hours, he, in carefully washing the delicate porcelain and brushing out the grime from the finely cut little figures, she, in as carefully drying it with the softest old towel she could find.

Alison worked well, and steadily; for although she was too much

excited to know or care what she was doing, there are states of mind in which the excitement of the brain lends unusual sureness and dexterity to the fingers. She neither broke nor chipped anything, although thought and touch had little connection with each other.

Uncle John was pleased with her apparent attention and the brightness of her eyes.

"There is a great deal of solid satisfaction to be derived from things; they are, perhaps, on the whole, more to be relied upon than persons," said John Harbuckle, brushing the white clouds from which Aurora was rising (on the side of a vase); "it is well to have an affection for things. I have found them a great comfort at times. Things and places—the City more particularly, I have found full of interest and consolation. The City nowadays has lost, so it seems to me, much of its permanence, there is such constant building and rebuilding going on, and even the time-honoured ground-plan is rapidly changing; but it is still a very great pleasure to me, it is still 'Merrie London, my most kindly nurse.'"

"Yes," said Alison, looking up from the saucer she was drying, "I like it better than any place I ever was in. That comes, perhaps, from having been born here. Oh, Uncle John, I forgot to tell you, I went to the Guildhall Museum this afternoon, and found out more about Matilda Fitzwalter. Then I happened to see a map of Old London, and by it I found my way home by good part of the wall. First I went to Moorgate, then along London Wall to Bishopsgate, by Houndsditch to Aldgate, and along the Minories to the Tower. And, do you know, I'm going to call the Minories 'The Street of The Little Sisters'—*Sorores Minores*, you know. What do you think of that, Uncle John?"

Uncle John's face suddenly beamed with delight.

"Dear, dear, dear me!" he exclaimed. "The thousands of times I've been through the Minories, and the discussions Woolcomb and I and other 'earth-worms' have had about the Convent of the Poor Clares that used to be there—and none of us ever thought of calling it in your simple poetic English, 'The Street of The Little Sisters!'"

"Poetic?" said Alison, blushing with pleasure, and with something of the feeling with which Jessie had asked, "Wonderful?" the other evening in the Tower Gardens.

"Poetic! yes, my dear. Ah!"—and Uncle John looked at her with an expression she had never seen on his face before—"how much everything in this world needs a woman's touch!"

Alison felt moved, but sought refuge in a remark that she too often made to herself:

"I'm afraid mine is very clumsy!"

"No, no, I can't have you say that! 'The Street of The Little Sisters!' Truly womanly of you, Alison, to think of so charming a name for that remarkably ugly street! Woolcomb will be more than ever impressed with your qualities; he'll be quite enraptured!"

So they chatted on until it struck John Harbuckle that it must be very late.

"Well, my dear, I think we must put the things away and go down. I'm very much pleased with the stuff. It's much better than I had fancied; but I think I shall let Woolcomb have it. Let us go down."

They found the other three just where they had left them, still talking by the open window in the dark.

Arthur Bayliss rose as he heard the door opened.

"Then you'll come round to breakfast to-morrow?" were the first words that reached John Harbuckle's ear as he entered the room.

It was his sister, Mary Bayliss, who uttered them; and John Harbuckle knew, with a certainty that left no room for questioning that he was no longer the master of his own house.

Arthur Bayliss did not accept the invitation readily, so John Harbuckle felt compelled to say:

"We shall expect you, Bayliss."

Courtesy, right feeling, demanded the words, but it struck John Harbuckle that he had signed his own deed of abdication.

"Thanks. Yes, I'll come round," said Bayliss, shaking hands with everybody.

Then he left the room, Jessie clinging to his arm as if afraid of losing him again, and Mrs. Bayliss following.

"I ought to be very thankful he's come back safe and sound," John Harbuckle said to himself; "of course, I ought to be glad; but somehow I can't rise to it. I suppose I shall be used to it in time, but at present I can't rise to it. It's no use trying, I can't."

Jessie and Mary had gone down to the door with the long-lost Arthur. The sound of laughing and talking, and lingering "Good-byes" came up from the open door below to the open window above.

"I wonder if Mary would welcome me back so cordially, if I went away? I think she might have let Jessie see him off alone. Well, well, I never was attractive," he said to himself. "Alison, you must try and keep Jessie quiet; take her upstairs at once, you mustn't let her talk any more to-night."

"Oh, no, we won't talk, of course, we'll try to be quiet. But isn't it a wonderful thing about Uncle Arthur? Isn't it a grand thing for Jessie? Isn't he handsome, and so very like my poor father! Altogether, I feel in a perfect whirl. And he thinks Jessie has grown so lovely. So she has; she seems to me prettier than any other girl I've ever met. I hope he won't take her away. Why couldn't he come and live here? Well, perhaps that wouldn't do; I don't know. Perhaps they've arranged something else, only I do hope he won't take her away."

"He will, you may depend upon it," said John Harbuckle, from a dark and distant corner, where he was pottering about nervously among his book-shelves.

"That will be horrible," said Alison; "but of course she belongs to him, only I do so hate giving up people I'm fond of. I'm a greater coward at parting than at anything else."

"My case precisely," said John Harbuckle.

"There, at last they've shut the door," said Alison. She put her head out of the window and called:

"Good-night, Uncle Arthur."

"Good-night!" he returned; he had already gone some little distance. Then the door was opened again, and by the light of the street-lamp, Alison saw Jessie running along the pavement after him.

She drew in her head.

Arthur Bayliss turned at the sound of the light, quick step.

Jessie ran up to him, threw her arms round his neck, and buried her head against his breast, crying:

"I wish you weren't going! I wish you weren't going! I'm afraid of losing you again!"

He kissed her many times.

"Well, darling, it's only for a few hours," he said.

"I'm afraid of your not being real," she whispered. "You'll be sure to come early to-morrow?"

"If I'm alive," he answered with more kisses. He led her back to the house again. She tore herself away from him, and ran upstairs to the window.

That last clasp of Jessie's arms was almost too much for her father; he was trembling all over with the thrill of it when he turned into Catherine Court on his way back to Fenchurch Avenue, and for a few moments he held on to the ironwork at the entrance. He had lived through so much emotion since he had met John Harbuckle early that evening in the Tower Subway, that he now felt as if he could hardly stand.

"My dear little girl! My dear little girl!" was all he could say to himself; but the joy of it was now absolute pain.

Presently he felt better and went on; went past the house where his wife had lived in her girlhood, and along the court through which he had led her when he and she had returned from Barking Church close by, as bridegroom and bride.

He lingered a little while there, feeling, with something almost like content, that Jessie's mother, could she know of that night's meeting, would rejoice.

Then he went on. There were no lights in the houses now; he was the only person in Catherine Court. He passed quickly between the two high walls at the end of the court, and the walls echoed back his step.

It startled him; the echo seemed like the footfall of that evil deed that was always on his track.

He started, but passed on at once through Seething Lane, past the Gate of the Dead, now touched by the soft summer moonlight,

by Hart Street, Mark Lane, Fenchurch Street, Fen Court to the Avenue; and there, on the handsome brass plate within the doorway, he read, as he let himself in, the name, "Arnold Birkett."

It seemed to stand up and confront him as the very substance of that evil deed that always followed him, whose dogging footfall he had heard as the echo of his own between the high walls of Catherine Court.

Arnold Birkett—a mere name, as he knew only too well—was a very ugly difficulty to face, and Arthur Bayliss was not a radically brave man.

That name rose up ominously between himself and his new-found Jessie.

How could he bring Jessie Bayliss there while "Arnold Birkett" was on that plate and he was known by that name?

After he had rung several times the door was opened by Mr. Jim Robbins. Arthur Bayliss went into the wide stone hall; "Arnold Birkett," in black paint upon the first door on the right, met him there also.

It was a fine large house, only just finished. He went up several flights of stairs to his private rooms.

Beyond the few things necessary they were not yet furnished. They were large, bare, and unhomelike.

"They want Jessie!" he said; "they must have Jessie! How is it to be done? She can't come here and live with 'Arnold Birkett!' How am I to tell her? I can't; I must."

Between "I can't" and "I must" Arthur Bayliss passed a restless night; but by the morning "I must" had conquered.

"I must tell John Harbuckle all," he said. "It will be a bitter task; but it will have to be done; there's no help for it. But all my tasks have been bitter since that one fatal act. Oh, is there never forgiveness!" he cried, in despair. "I could almost wish I had never returned; never seen my sweet girl's face nor felt her clasp! I am bound to 'Arnold Birkett' like the Roman criminal to the corpse! There's no help for it now. I must tell John Harbuckle!"

As Arnold Birkett, Arthur Bayliss had lived and done business for several years abroad. As Arnold Birkett he was already known in the City; as Arnold Birkett he had taken the offices in Fenchurch Avenue, and under that name had a considerable connection in London, in Manchester, and on the coast of Africa. The Tildesleys, all his few fresh friends, knew him as Arnold Birkett. Arnold Birkett was in the business world an individual with a definite position; Arthur Bayliss was a man long since dead and almost forgotten, except, perhaps, by those who happened to have been his creditors.

It was a very grave difficulty, he could not see his way out of it.

In that long conversation by the open window of the house in

Trinity Square he had never alluded to Arnold Birkett; and indeed, when Mary Bayliss came to put that conversation together in her thoughts, it struck her that, although he had talked much and told them a great deal about Africa, and also something of his hopes and his prospects in London, he had, after all, said very little about himself.

Mary wanted to ask her brother-in-law a great many questions; but as she felt sure they would not be answered, she resolved to wait, and let the truth—about which her curiosity was vividly aroused—reveal itself by degrees. She was certain, however, that she should never rest satisfied until she could make a consecutive narrative of Arthur's proceedings from the day he had left Jessie's mother, under circumstances not yet clear to her, until the meeting with John Harbuckle in the Tower Subway. During that long conversation she had once tried to approach the real heart of the subject, but Arthur Bayliss had gently talked away from it.

"Whatever it is, she—Jessie's mother—would have forgiven him; and I'm sure I do. He brings back—ah, but how slightly!—he brings back my James, and that's more than all to me."

So Mary determined to be very kind to him. John Harbuckle, whom she could never quite forgive for taking her from Birrendale, was more than once or twice seized with pangs of jealousy, and felt, as it were, chronically hurt. John Harbuckle could not help seeing that in comparison to Arthur Bayliss he himself was simply nobody to Mary.

Mary drove her brother out early next morning to go and prowl about and see what he could find very nice for breakfast; and the old bachelor, always an admirable caterer (married men may smile incredulously, but I will maintain this as a fact), the old bachelor, I repeat, returned in due time with a bag full of the most delicious "examples" that the different markets could supply, including roses for the table and for the personal adornment of the girls.

The roses were just the very match for Jessie's cheeks, as she sat, with Mac's newly-arrived letter in her pocket, looking towards Catherine Court, whence, every moment, she expected her father to emerge.

Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were bright, but her hands were icy cold, although the sun was already strong.

At last there he was; she flew downstairs to give him the first welcome. Fairer than ever she looked to him; but even as he hurried to meet her, that dreadful shadow, that "Arnold Birkett," seemed to be standing between them. But Jessie lifted her face right through the shadow she had never seen, and her father bent through it and kissed her.

Jessie was very merry that morning. Her father had not vanished into thin air; she was delighted to see him again.

During breakfast her tongue ran on and on as if it would never stop. Her father promised to take the girls to the theatre in the evening;

that was another new delight to her, for Uncle John had never taken them to a theatre.

"Can you spare me half an hour?" asked Arthur Bayliss, looking across the table to John Harbuckle, when breakfast was finished. "I should be glad if you could come round to my office in Fenchurch Avenue at once; but if you can't, suppose we say at five o'clock?"

"Why not stay here and talk?" put in the widow, who was anxious to detain him as long as possible.

"I'm at your service now," said John Harbuckle quietly.

"You'll dine with us of course, Arthur?" said Mary as the two men rose to leave.

"Well, no, not to-day; thank you all the same."

"We'll have it early for the girls, you know," said Mary.

"I'll call for them in good time. In the meanwhile, perhaps Jessie will look over the paper and see if she and Alison can hit upon a play that will suit them both."

"Yes! Yes!" said Jessie. "But mayn't I come and see your office?"

"Let us all go!" exclaimed Mrs. Bayliss, in a tone so gushing that it made Jessie say to herself: "I suppose they all think he belongs to them; but they'll soon find out he belongs only to me."

"Time's running on," said John Harbuckle.

"Well," said the widow, "I suppose we mustn't intrude upon business hours." But she relinquished the idea of seeing the brother-in-law's place with evident reluctance.

"I think you might let me come with you, father," said Jessie, as if a little hurt.

"Presently, my darling. You'll be ready in good time this evening? Poor child!"—for she clung to him—"do you think I won't come back? Of course I will. Do you suppose I don't want to see how pretty you're going to look this evening? There! there! Good-bye!"

He tried to speak lightly, and he laughed and nodded at the little group that was watching him from the door, but he felt terribly ill at ease as he adjusted his long stride to John Harbuckle's slower and shorter step.

They were soon among the men who were now arriving from all quarters. Arthur Bayliss, had he been alone, would have walked along at the same brisk, business-like rate as the majority of his fellow pedestrians; but John Harbuckle had acquired an habitual saunter, and whether he trod the City pavement on a Sunday, when he had it nearly all to himself, or on a week-day morning, when he shared it with busy thousands, he never varied his pace.

The two men, so dissimilar in every particular, walking side by side, and talking only on such topics as the alterations that Bayliss noticed, came in a few minutes to Fenchurch Avenue.

"Which," said Arthur Bayliss, "seems to me newer than anything else I have yet met with; it suggests to me, indeed, New York rather than London. I was never more surprised than when I came for the first time up that narrow little dark turning out of Fenchurch Street, and found myself here, where Fen Court used to be."

New enough it certainly was, for buildings were still in process of erection, and old ones of demolition.

The churchyard of the vanished church of St. Gabriel occupied one corner. It had been recently fresh gravelled—it was neatly swept and garnished, and owned a few green trees. A broad asphalt pavement ran from it right up to great tall blocks of new offices, as handsome as polished granite and plate glass could make them. An old house or two, with narrow windows and semi-circular porticoes, like inverted shells, although nearly squeezed out of existence by its modern neighbours, still lingered on here and there; suggesting by a certain domesticity in its architecture that homes had once been made in the heart of the City.

"My friend Woolcomb's father used to live in that house they're pulling down," said John Harbuckle. "It was an interesting example of a London merchant's house; there was some undoubted Jacobean work in it. Which is your place? Why, bless me!—there's Robbins!"

"Do you know that fellow? He's the brother of our caretaker," said Arthur Bayliss.

"Is he though?" observed John Harbuckle with interest. "And are you 'the party' for whom he's looking up a sideboard?"

"Well, I did say something about it, I believe. I've taken the top rooms here, as I've already told you."

"Bless me! Dear, dear, dear me! Then it was about your sideboard I went over to Bermondsey yesterday. What a very strange coincidence!"

"A very fortunate one, since it led to our meeting. Curiosity took me down the Subway," said Bayliss. "Is the thing worth having?"

"At a price; it is genuine, but not a fine work. What does he ask?"

"So much."

"Too much. Offer him such a sum; he'll take it."

"All right, then; I'll make it rather over that under the happy circumstances."

"Well, Robbins, you didn't get my card this morning," said John Harbuckle, stepping up to his late factotum.

"No, sir; I were just a-coming on to you. But," lowering his voice, "blest if that ain't the party!—that's the Mr. Birkett it's for. Did you see it, sir?"

"My friend will give you so much for the sideboard; that's more than it's worth," said John Harbuckle.

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Robbins, as if with horror, "why the man over the water'll charge me that!"

"I don't think so," observed John Harbuckle, in his driest tone. "Well, there's the offer; you can do what you like with it."

"I suppose I must take it, as Mr. Birkett's likely to want something else," said the crestfallen Robbins.

"Very well; you'll not lose by it. Good day," said John Harbuckle, and he followed Arthur Bayliss into the hall of one of the new houses, saying to himself:

"Birkett! What does he mean? What's that on the plate, 'Arnold Birkett and Co.?' What's that on the office door?—'Arnold Birkett.'"

They passed through a large, well-appointed office, where a couple of clerks were at work, into the private room.

"Who is Arnold Birkett?" John Harbuckle asked, when they were together in the room and the door had been closed.

"I am," said Arthur Bayliss. "Sit down, Harbuckle; that's what I want to talk to you about. I don't know what to do."

There was a comfortable chair on each side of the new desk-table; the two men sat down opposite each other. John Harbuckle noticed, and it touched him, how haggard Bayliss's face grew as he spoke. He looked across anxiously, as if waiting for further confidence.

"You see now why I didn't want the others to come here until you had been. God know how much I want to be free from that wretched name and all it means," Bayliss went on.

"Can't you drop it?" asked John Harbuckle.

Arthur Bayliss told him about as much as you know already.

"No; I don't see how I can; at least not yet awhile. I've made such a splendid start here; if I can only keep up the pace for a year or two I may be able to make everything square. You will believe me when I say I am above everything anxious to set myself right with the world. In the meanwhile, how am I to have Jessie here?"

"Jessie's going to be married," said John Harbuckle.

"That's in the future," said Jessie's father; "that may never happen. Look here," he went on, rising as he spoke, "if I get talking about these matters I shall be quite unfit for business. I wanted you to come here now, because I didn't like the idea of any of you hearing of it second-hand. Can you look in at five o'clock? I've a press of business to-day that I must get through somehow, although I feel more dead than alive. Harbuckle"—he hesitated, and grew paler—"come at five. I'll tell you all; I must tell someone, or I shall go mad. I can't tell Jessie, or Mary. Come at five. Here's Tildesley and another man. You'll be here at five precisely?—you won't keep me waiting, will you?"

There was an urgent appeal in the last question that went

straight to John Harbuckle's heart; he was very sorry for Arthur Bayliss.

"At five precisely," he replied firmly, and left the office.

"He killed her," said John Harbuckle, as he faced the swept and garnished churchyard in Fenchurch Avenue, "I see it in his face! he killed her! God help him and me too!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

JESSIE AS A PERSON OF IMPORTANCE.

IT was all one bewilderment to Mary and the girls in the old-fashioned house in Trinity Square after the men had departed.

Jessie, who had been quiet and subdued yesterday evening, was now in that state of excitement when a girl talks a great deal of nonsense. At the end of half-an-hour, occupied by talking and, during lucid intervals, by arranging her own and Alison's toilette for the evening, Jessie had talked herself into the position of a person of importance.

"Now, eminent literary woman," she began, as she tried on the lace she had half made up her mind to wear; "now, authoress, now is your time for making studies of a real, undoubted, genuine heroine! I told you I always knew I was born to be a heroine! Now for your novel, Alie. (I say—shall I dye this with tea or saffron or keep it as it is? Very pale saffron, with flowers to match, eh? like that girl we saw at St. James's Hall last Monday; that will do best, won't it?) Yes, Alie, do *me* well, my child, and your fortune's made! Will you just put down those old dry-as-dust books and give the whole of your gigantic intellect to me. You know I'm immensely proud of you; I've told my father you're the cleverest girl in London, so you must sustain your reputation. Will you or won't you make a study of me? Will you do me—me with a father come to life again, or are you going to throw away the finest chance ever presented to any scribbling woman on this round earth? What! Oh, I'm nothing compared to the Tower, I suppose! The blindness—the blindness of some people I could mention! Well, I mean to be written about, so if you won't do it!—I'll just do it myself. Now, if poor Mac Carruthers were here, wouldn't I make him mount Pegasus! and wouldn't I make his Pegasus go! but as for you, Alison—it makes me savage to think I can't drive you. You're just the only person in the world I can't drive. I often wonder what sort of a mind you can have. Something very different from mine!"

"Yours! Why you haven't one. The idea of your having a mind!"

"Haven't I! My father thinks I have, I can tell you. Just the sort of mind a woman ought to have, he says; and he ought to know; he's been about the world a great deal and used his eyes."

"And his eye-lashes," remarked Alison.

She could not resist saying it; but she felt immediately that under the circumstances it was a trifle too sarcastic.

Jessie, however, did not think so; she at once launched out into extravagant praises of her father's looks and ways, which resulted in Alison's recalling so vividly the grave beside the Birren Water that tears came into her eyes; so that Jessie had to throw away her finery and embrace her cousin and cry too. Presently, smiles and nonsense having returned, a cabinet council was held, at which it was proposed by Jessie, and seconded by Alison, that the saffron lace would not be worthy of the occasion, and that they had not a decent pair of gloves between them.

"Can we conscientiously say we must have something fresh?" asked Jessie, with immense solemnity.

"We can," returned Alison decisively.

"Beautiful, beautiful thing, I shall have to part with you!" said Jessie, addressing a crisp five-pound note her father had just given her "to get any little odds and ends she might want."

Jessie gazed at the note with fond admiration; it made her father feel real to her, and it also made her feel extremely rich; for seldom before this had she possessed more than half-a-crown at a time; and since Uncle James's death even the half-crowns had come very rarely. Uncle John never gave Jessie money, although through Mrs. Bayliss he paid for a good many things for her.

"We'll just go and lavish it!" said Jessie; "for once in my life I should like to know the sensation! And, Alison, I must make you look really nice to-night!"

"Oh, never mind me!" said Alison. "Besides, I can't run to more than eightpence three-farthings."

"No, because you've been spending all your money on me! Never mind, I'm going to pay you out for it now!"

So the two girls had a most delightful walk to St. Paul's Churchyard, where they looked in at all the shops, and where Jessie changed the first five-pound note she had ever owned, with a feeling of having suddenly become one of the most important persons in her Majesty's dominions; a feeling which above all she enjoyed.

In the afternoon, however, her head ached dreadfully, and she was glad to lie down for a couple of hours. It was a trouble to her to write even a few lines to Mac; she began a note, but it was not easy to tell him in a dozen words what had happened. So after she had written, "My dearest Mac, I have something to tell you which will surprise you very much," she could go no further, and no note was sent that day. It was the first time she had missed writing to him.

"Thank God for the daily work that must be done!" exclaimed John Harbuckle devoutly, on his return to his office, where he found several men waiting for orders, a pile of letters to read and answer,

and a reminder that there was an urgent affair demanding immediate attention.

"Thank God for daily work!" From how many aching hearts do the words ascend every hour of every day, with thanks not only for the daily bread the daily work brings, but for the daily work that enables them to live through their daily sorrow. Men and women who hated the morning light, that brought with it a fresh sense of bereavement, or calamity, rise to find their daily task awaiting them, and as the hours go by the crushing load of grief grows less, until, if they cannot smile at their work, they can at least be calm, for:

"God in cursing gives us better gifts
Than man in benediction."

That daily work that *must* be done, it meets us in the morning like a terrible and imperious tyrant; but its very tyranny is its value. So felt Arthur Bayliss after he and John Harbuckle had parted. It was dreadful to him to have to set to work, but it helped him to get through the day; and there are days in the lives of all of us that it seems we could hardly live through without such help.

This was one of them to him.

"At five precisely? You'll not keep me waiting?"

Arthur Bayliss's last words had sounded to John Harbuckle like the patient's appeal to the surgeon who is coming to perform a ghastly operation, or like Anne Boleyn's "I pray you despatch me quickly." to the headsman over yonder on the Tower Green, just the other side of the little church, whose quaint belfry John Harbuckle saw from his own doorstep when he left home that evening to keep his appointment.

The first of the neighbouring clocks struck five as the old bachelor entered the narrow passage that leads from Fenchurch Street to the Avenue; the last had not finished striking when he again read on the well-polished brass plate the name, "Arnold Birkett."

At the porter's desk in the hall was Mr. "Jim" Robbins, who informed him that Mr. Birkett was upstairs and would be glad to see him at once.

It was a very long way up to the top of the tall house, but at last John Harbuckle reached the room and Arthur Bayliss.

The room was large and well proportioned, full of glaring light from the uncurtained windows, but containing little else except a sofa, a table and a couple of chairs.

Arthur Bayliss was pacing up and down in a state of desperate excitement.

"You're punctual," he exclaimed, throwing his cigar into the grate. "I couldn't have stood this much longer."

"I've come as you requested me to do," said John Harbuckle quietly, taking a chair; "but, remember, I have no wish to force your confidence in any way."

"I must tell someone; I shall go mad if I don't! I must tell you!" said Bayliss, pulling at his moustache in extreme agitation, and still walking about. "It was not a premeditated act. I had no thought of it; I never dreamed of such a thing until the very moment. God left me, the Devil tempted me; I was distracted, mad; I saw a chance; the Devil must have shown it me. I rushed at it at once—like a moth at a candle—it was done beyond recall before I had time to think."

He spoke in abrupt sentences, pacing up and down the while, and talking on as if rather to himself than to his visitor.

"We were so happy at first," he went on; "she loved me so—she was everything, all the world to me—our little girl was so sweet to both of us. It was too good to last: it seems like heaven to look back upon—my life's been hell ever since. Then my brother James got into trouble (he always was in trouble, poor fellow), I had to help him out of it. Then, as you will remember, there was the bank failure. Nothing went right after that. I ought to have stopped sooner, perhaps, but I was so proud of our firm, we had done so well—I struggled on and on, grew more and more involved, knew bankruptcy was inevitable. Things became desperately bad; I had one hope—I didn't know the world then as I do now, or I shouldn't have been fool enough to entertain it—but I had one last hope. There was a man in Paris, the head of a large house there; I had made that man, I had helped him (I was always too ready to help others; much good has it done me!), I had helped that man, Harbuckle, I had helped him at a crisis when not any other creature would lend him a pound; I said to myself after I had written in vain, 'If I go and see him he must come to the rescue now.' I was afraid, not knowing from one day to the next what might happen, to leave my wife and child in Liverpool, I took them with me as far as Boulogne. I went to Paris, I saw that man." He paused, and for the moment could not speak, then with a fierce gesture, as if he were flinging the man violently from him, he went on, "What's the use of talking of it? That hope, my last, like all else, was rotten and failed me. I returned to Boulogne, to Jessie, and our little girl. I saw them, they tried to soothe me. Jessie, poor darling, broken-hearted as she was, tried hard to give me hope again. I could not endure the sight of them, it was torture, pure and simple, to be with them. We were to return to Liverpool in the evening. I knew there was no hope, that my last chance was gone, that I must meet my creditors, that I had scarcely anything to offer them; it seemed to me worse than death. Yet I ought to have gone on; if I had only been brave, I might have righted myself as other men have done. But I was a coward, and the Devil knew I was! I could not endure to look at the wife and child whom I had ruined. And yet it was hardly my fault, after all; I had striven my hardest, and up to that time I had done nothing wrong. I walked about the streets of that wretched

town for hours, because I could not face them. It has always been my curse that I could never face distress. At last—how horribly distinct it all is to me still!—at last I went for refuge and rest, for I was nearly worn out, into the reading-room in the old Museum there. I can see it all now, the French soldier reading a yellow-covered book, the old curator munching an apple; there was no one else there. I took up an English paper, there were several on the table; I did not read it, I could not see a word, until, at last, out of the meaningless print, there arose—and the type seemed to grow gigantic as I looked at it—my own name—Arthur Bayliss! It was among the deaths. My attention was thus aroused. I hurried through the announcement, and in another instant, as if by a flash of lightning, a way of escape was revealed. You saw the announcement I dare say?"

"Under the date of the 7th of April?" asked John Harbuckle.

"I saw it."

"Would to heaven I had *not* seen it!" exclaimed Arthur Bayliss.

"A man of my name was lost, with many others, in the foundering of the African mail steamer *Mellacoorie*. He was a Liverpool man; the steamer was lost off the Wexford Coast; she sailed the day I had left England. Everything fitted exactly; I saw at once what I could do—I must have been mad—I believe I was; what I did had that sure, unerring swiftness that accompanies some forms of madness. I went out, bought black-edged paper and money orders; wrote to the English papers, paid for three more insertions of the notice, to contain, in addition to the one I had read, *my own Liverpool address in full*. I repeat, I must have been mad to have done such a thing; but, as mad as I was, I was only too successful—I, who had failed so desperately in my lawful strivings, succeeded now. Every farthing I had in the world was in my pocket. I sent the greater part of it to my wife. I wrote—I don't know how—a letter to her, I told her all, I implored her, by her love to me, to appear in Liverpool in widow's weeds. I told her I was going to Africa, the only place where I knew I should be sure to find employment at once. I told her that in a few months I should be able to send for her; I tried to paint a lovely, peaceful home in Madeira, where she would grow well and strong, and where I could see her sometimes. Ah! It was that pictured home in Madeira that lured me on—no, no—perhaps it was not—it was my own cowardice, my dread of facing exposure!—but I could let her face it! I was mad—I could not have done such a thing had I been sane, I, who would have thought nothing of risking my life for her. I went to Africa, I found work; I made money—but all too late—too late to save her! I have let Time pay my debts; I have returned. That's all I have to say. The rest you know as well—better—than I." And Arthur Bayliss—who had paused for a moment, while he had uttered the last sentence—turned abruptly and went out on to the little balcony in front of the open window.

When Bayliss had begun his narrative, John Harbuckle's clear blue eyes had followed him in his paces up and down the room with a peculiarly keen, penetrating glance. As the tragedy in which he was himself so deeply interested was hurriedly unfolded, he turned away from the speaker. With his arms resting on his knees and his hands tightly clasped in front of them, he bent forward and looked intently on the floor.

After Bayliss had finished, John Harbuckle retained the same position for some time ; but his eyes were closed, his hands more tightly clasped, his brow drawn and deepened, his usual fresh colour gone ; his bowed grey head looking altogether greyer and older than it had done when he had met Arthur Bayliss, twenty-four hours ago, in the Tower Subway.

It was not in him then to feel again the agitation that had seized him when first the sound of that voice had hurried him wildly along the path above the moat, exclaiming :

"He robbed me of my Jessie ! Here in these very gardens !"

He had heard that voice now going on and on ; but it had not been to him like a voice so much as the solemn unfolding of the mystery that had surrounded that Jessie's death. It was all so past—so irrevocable, so beyond human help now ; its very hopelessness brought calm.

"Have you nothing to say ?" presently asked Arthur Bayliss from the balcony, in the tone of wild despair he had used all along.

"Nothing," replied John Harbuckle, only his lips moving.

He sat motionless with his head bowed. He knew that other man was there ; he knew—the very words passed through his brain—that man had tortured to death his Jessie, the Jessie they had both loved, using her conscience as the weapon to kill her with ; her face, so full of bewildered anguish—her face as he had last seen it—was gazing at him with horror now. That man was a coward—that man had put her to a cruel death ; but that man's heart and life were broken. That man had confided in him—trusted him. It was not possible to reprove him now, neither was it possible to speak to him friendly words. John Harbuckle rose, put on his hat, and slowly walked out of the room.

(To be continued.)

THE RETURN TO FRANCE.

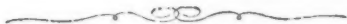
FOUR years of anguish, bitterness and shame
Under the sting, the torture and the ban,
And he returns—brought back to peace and fame
A broken man!

Four weary years of insult, rage and pain!
Bowed down to earth, with wild eyes full of woe,
The exile comes, absolved—and free from stain
As driven snow!

Four years! how hard a debt for life to pay!
What can restore the days in darkness lost?
What future sum of glory can defray
The cruel cost?

For crime against all human brotherhood
Ah! let his country weep with tears of blood!

C. E. MEETKERKE.



SCENES IN A NOVELIST'S LANDSCAPE.

IF a stranger were wandering down the narrow and leafy Warwickshire lanes between Bedworth and Nuneaton, and were to halt, say, in front of that well-looking house at Griff—the largest among the nine or twelve that constitute the coal-bound parish—under the roof-tree of which George Eliot lived in maidenhood; if this stranger were to stop one of those dark-skinned men he might by chance meet there, and ask him the way to “Cheverel Manor,” the man would take his pipe from his mouth—for a collier *will* smoke in spite of all the legislators in the world—look hard at the stranger, shake his woolly head, and say, with a half-smile upon his face at the humour of a person having missed his road:

“Ney, you mun be cum the wrong road, I doubt. 'Appen you ar' missed your way, sir. I hanna ever heered on a place wi' that name.”

But if the stranger should improve upon the mistake by saying that he meant Arbury Hall, the miner's face would smile even through its duskiness, and he would be sure to say:

“Oh! you mean old Charley's place? Poor old Charley Newdigate, him as died some years agoo; as good a gaffer, sir, as 'appen I shall ever drive a pick for—above ground or below ground either. Oh! yes, sir, I *can* show you the way to Arbury Hall, an' I shanna be long about it, I reckon. But as for Cheverel Manner, or what you calls it, as you just spoke on, why I hanna ever heered on that name i' these parts, an' I've lived i' Griff an' Beddorth boy an' man this forty-three year.”

By the same token that a man is no hero to his valet, a mere writer of books is a “poor critter” in the eyes of Strephon, even when Strephon is covered with coal-dust instead of the agricultural loam. A writer born in the midst of squalid and rural surroundings may often be “monstrously clever” in the art of making books, but to his neighbours who know nothing of books, except the Bible, and sometimes not much of that, he is a pitiful object indeed, and fair game for the wit that is indigenous to the bucolic and the mining mind.

And so George Eliot, a “monstrously clever woman,” as a friend of mine, a former Bedworth coalmaster, and a man who knew Mary Ann Evans in the flesh eighteen years ago, is always fond of repeating, is no heroine to her own countrymen. Some of the more rough diamonds among them would look as confused at the name of George Eliot as at Cheverel Manor, and the stranger who had the hardihood to ask for direction to “Shepperton Church” would be met with the reply:

"Theer inna a church o' that name i' these parts. Theer be Coton, Beddorth, Exhul, Astley, an' Corley, but I donna mind heerin' tell on such a place or Shep'ton. You mun mean Coton, I 'spect, or 'appen Beddorth, wheer Muster Evans be the parson."

Arbury Hall will, in the ages to come, be noted for its connection with George Eliot, who has made it the "Cheverel Manor" about which the Griff miner "hanna ever heered on." In the far past, however, the writer of contemporary history was busy there; and there is also a glamour of romance associated with a former owner of the Hall, which has not even found its way into George Eliot's books, or the guide-books of the day, but which is, nevertheless, a fact greatly adding to the interest of this neighbourhood, in the midst of which the famous Sir Roger Newdigate raised his ecclesiastic and semi-Gothic pile.

A six-mile walk from the "City of three Tall Spires," along the leafy and pleasant road that leads to Nuneaton and on to Leicester, brings the traveller to Griff and Bedworth, and close to the Cheverel Manor of 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story.' That South Farm, too, where George Eliot was born on that dull November morning in 1819, will be within measurable distance of the traveller's survey.

A very long time ago, before the Newdigates became possessors of Arbury, there was in existence, near the park, a farm known as Temple House. It was an old building, surrounded by a moat, and belonged to the principals of an ancient manor thereabouts, called the Manor of St. John of Jerusalem. Surely the South Farm, in which Mr. Robert Evans used to reside, and in which his illustrious daughter first saw the light, must have risen from the ruins of Temple House.

Before it was ecclesiastic—which it became under the hand of Sir Roger Newdigate, the Gothic-loving baronet of "Cheverel Manor"—Arbury Hall was monastic. It was called "Erebury Priory" then, and was founded in the reign of Henry II. by Ralph de Sudely as a home for the St. Augustine Order of Canons. At the dissolution of monasteries in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Henry VIII., Erebury Priory was suppressed, and its possessions granted by Royal Letters Patent to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.

It is at this point in the history of "Cheverel Manor" that the romance comes in, which is not to be found in any of George Eliot's books, and does not figure in the topographical prints of the period.

A very rare pamphlet, of which it is supposed there are only two copies now extant, entitled 'English Adventures,' was printed and published in 1667. It dealt with strange occurrences that had befallen old and noble families of the time; and, no doubt, as many of the adventures were repugnant to the descendants of the families concerned, being thus publicly promulgated, steps were taken to suppress as many of the pamphlets as possible. One of the adventures was connected with the life of Charles Brandon, one of the

early owners and occupiers of Arbury Hall, or Cheverel Manor, when in its monastic form, and was as follows:—

"Upon the death of his lady, the father of Charles Brandon retired to an estate on the borders of Hampshire. His family consisted of two sons, and a young lady, the daughter of a friend lately deceased, whom he adopted as his own child. This lady being singularly beautiful, as well as amiable in her manners, attracted the attention of both brothers. The elder, however, was the favourite, and he privately married her, which the younger resenting, the two brothers fought, and the elder fell, cut through the heart. The lady lost her reason, and soon afterwards died. The father broke down and went to his grave in a very short time. Charles Brandon, the younger brother, and author of all this misery, quitted England in despair, with a fixed determination of never returning. Being abroad for several years, his nearest relatives supposed him to be dead, and began to take the necessary steps for obtaining his estates. Aroused by this intelligence, he returned privately to England, and for a time took private lodgings in the vicinity of his family mansion.

"While he was in this retreat, the young King, Henry VIII., who had just buried his father, was one day hunting on the borders of Hampshire, when he heard the cries of a female in distress, issuing from an adjoining wood. His gallantry immediately summoned him to the place, though he then happened to be detached from all his courtiers, when he saw two ruffians attacking a young lady.

"The King instantly drew his sword upon them, and a scuffle ensued, which roused the reverie of Charles Brandon, who was taking his morning walk in an adjacent thicket. He immediately ranged himself on the side of the King, whom he did not then know, and by his dexterity soon disarmed one of the ruffians, while the other fled. The King, charmed with his act of gallantry, so congenial to his own mind, inquired the name and family of the stranger, and not only repossessed him of his patrimonial estates, but took him under his own immediate protection.

"It was this same Charles Brandon who afterwards privately married King Henry's sister, Margaret, Queen Dowager of France; which marriage the King not only forgave, but created him Duke of Suffolk, and continued his favour towards him to the last hour of the duke's life.

"The Duke died before Henry, and the latter showed, in his attachment to this nobleman, that, notwithstanding his fits of caprice, he was capable of a cordial and steady friendship. He was sitting in council when the news of Suffolk's death reached him, and he publicly took that occasion both to express his own sorrow, and to celebrate the merits of the deceased. He declared that during the whole course of their acquaintance, his brother-in-law had not made a single attempt to injure an adversary, and had never whispered a word to the disadvantage of anyone. 'And are there any of you, my lords, who can say as much?'

"The King looked round in all their faces, and saw that confusion which the consciousness of secret guilt naturally drew upon them."

So late as 1825 there was a large painting of the Brandon incident at Woburn, the seat of the Duke of Bedford; and the old Dowager Duchess, in showing this picture to a nobleman a few years before her death, is said to have related all the particulars of the story.

Associations like these serve to make the site of the "Cheverel Manor" of George Eliot doubly interesting, and the marvel is that the author of 'Scenes of Clerical Life' did not make use of this pretty romance in some way—either in describing the ancient history of the place, or in a neatly-woven story such as she knew well how to weave. But George Eliot was essentially a delineator of modern manners, not a writer of historical scenes, and so the visitor to Arbury Hall must look elsewhere for the primeval history of the place.

The heirs of Charles Brandon, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, sold Arbury Hall and the estates to Sir Edmund Anderson, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. He, probably, out of respect for the stern Protestantism of his royal mistress, and with a desire to win her favour, demolished the old monkish house, and built from the ruins what Dugdale called "a fair structure of quadrangular form."

No sooner was this building completed, in the twenty-eighth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, than the legal knight fostered a dislike to it, and passed the estate away in exchange to John Newdegate for the Manor of Harefield, in Middlesex, where the Newdegate family had been located since the days of Edward III. The Newdegates thus made Arbury Hall their family seat, and began to spell their name with an *i*.

In 1734 the estates descended to Sir Roger Newdigate, who acquired the title from an ancestor. He seems to have been a gentleman of much note, attached very strongly to literature and the fine arts, and particularly devoted to the study of archæological architecture. He, as George Eliot points out in 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story,' had made "the grand tour" of European cities, and returned, doubtless, deeply in love with the mansions of Italy, and rather ashamed of "the fair structure of quadrangular form" at Arbury, to which he had succeeded when only sixteen years old.

Sir Roger, indeed, would seem in many respects to have been endowed with exceptional abilities. He was born in 1718, presumably at Harefield, for in the very year of his majority he was elected Member of Parliament for Middlesex in the Tory interest. At Oxford, where he won the highest honours and formed distinguished friendships, he secured enviable popularity.

After being the Parliamentary representative for Middlesex for six years, he was elected Member for the University, and held the position for thirty years. During that period he made "the grand tour" already spoken of, and in conjunction with Sir Horace Walpole,

to whom he was much attached, worked energetically to revive the beauties of the Gothic style in architecture.

Thus Sir Roger set about converting the old and uncouth Arbury Hall into the Cheverel Manor of to-day. He laboriously drew up his own designs, and entered into a contract with a well-known builder to carry out the scheme.

At that time there was a young man employed on the ground, evidently a sort of right-hand man to Sir Roger, for in the renovation and remodelling of the Hall he was eminently useful, and constantly in request. This young man's name was Robert Evans, the subsequent father of George Eliot; and it was well for Sir Roger Newdigate, in more ways than one, that he had so trusty a servant, upon whom he could rely in his hour of need.

Before the unsightly chambers were hidden by turrets, the beautiful mullioned windows put in, the outer walls cased with stone, the vast courtyard environed with a cloister—in short, some time before Arbury Hall was metamorphosed into its present attractive shape, the man who had contracted to build the place became a bankrupt, and brought a sudden cessation to the active work then in progress. Sir Roger, for the moment, was in a state of great perturbation, but the remarkable tact and ability of Robert Evans stood him in good stead, and the "Cheverel Manor" as it appears to-day was finished under the watchful eyes of the architect and his excellent steward.

Arbury Hall was probably finished in or about 1773, as in that year Sir John Astley, of the adjoining Astley Castle, made Sir Roger Newdigate a present of the famous painting depicting the celebrated exploits of Sir John de Astley, who flourished in the early part of the fifteenth century.

The outside of the house, with its castellated grey-tinted front and mullioned windows, is easily recognised by all readers of 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story.' It is in the interior, however, that the descriptions of George Eliot force themselves upon the mind, as the visitor looks with a curious eye upon the ecclesiastical and other adornments, placed in their respective positions by the lavish hand of Sir Roger. The saloon ornaments are copied from the fan tracery in Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster. In a similar manner the ceiling of the drawing-room is elaborately carved with tracery, in which are inserted different armorial bearings on small shields.

The room next to the saloon contains the picture before alluded to. It commemorates the exploits of Sir John de Astley, a famous knight, who vanquished in a duel at Paris one Peter de Maise, and in the thirtieth year of Henry VI.'s reign fought with, and defeated, at Smithfield, an Aragonian knight, named Sir Philip Boyle, who seems to have been a kind of Don Quixote, anxious to cross lances with some great fighter. A replica of this painting is preserved at Patshall, the seat of the Earl of Dartmouth, a descendant of the Astleys of Arbury.

George Eliot has herself well described the dining-room. In her day it was so bare of furniture that it impressed one with its architectural beauty like a cathedral.

"The slight matting and a sideboard in a recess did not detain the eye for a moment from the lofty groined ceiling, with its richly-carved pendants, all of creamy white, relieved here and there by touches of gold. On one side this lofty ceiling was supported by pillars and arches, beyond which a lower ceiling, a miniature copy of the higher one, covered the square projection, which, with its three pointed windows, formed the central feature of this building. The room looked less like a place to dine in than a piece of space inclosed simply for the sake of beautiful outline; and the small dining-table seemed a small and insignificant accident rather than anything connected with the original purpose of this building."

During the long lifetime of the late Charles N. Newdigate this room had an air of conservatism about it as rigid as that possessed by its owner. It was, with the smallest variation, the same room as that so carefully described in 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story.'

Sir Roger Newdigate, the man of cultivated mind and exquisite taste, died in 1806, at the age of eighty-eight. With his death the title became extinct. In his will Sir Roger bequeathed Arbury Hall to Mr. Francis Parker, on condition that he adopted the name of Newdigate, and with a reversion to the father of the late C. N. Newdigate, who had then come into possession again of the estates at Harefield, and who was enjoined to add the old spelling of the name of "Newdegate" to that of the Charles Newdigate received at the baptismal font. The name of the erstwhile owner of Arbury Hall, therefore, was Charles Newdegate Newdigate.

The little village of Griff—in the vicinity of which George Eliot was born, and in which, as already written, lived her brother, Isaac Pearson Evans, the 'Tom Tulliver' of 'The Mill on the Floss'—was at the Conquest survey involved with Chilvers Coton. In the third year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Griff was purchased by John Giffard, whose grandson, in Dugdale's time, passed it on to Sir John Newdigate, father of Sir Roger; it thus became the property of the Newdigates, and the little parish has continued in their family to the present time.

Mining has been the chief industry carried on at Griff for more than two centuries. When the father of the late Charles N. Newdigate settled at Arbury, he went energetically into the work, and appointed John Evans, uncle to George Eliot, as his colliery agent. That was a golden time for the Warwickshire coal-owners. Railways had not then stretched their feelers into "the heart of England," as Michael Drayton calls Warwickshire; so that our good ancestors—as can be seen in George Eliot's 'Silas Marner'—only a little more than half a century ago were obliged to travel chiefly by stage coach and pack-horse.

Though taking a great interest in the work of railways, Mr. Newdigate, father of the quondam member for North Warwickshire, was also keenly alive to the importance of canals, which at that time were being introduced. The miles upon miles of navigable water-courses that flow so placidly through this beautiful and classic shire tell of the foresight, knowledge, and skilful engineering abilities of our forefathers.

Something may be said of a canal that passes near George Eliot's neighbourhood, which was constructed in 1830, and in which the old Mr. Newdigate took a large share of interest.

During the Parliamentary session of 1829 the Oxford Canal Company obtained powers to improve that part of their canal which lies between Braunston in Warwickshire and Longford in Northamptonshire, and which communicated with the Grand Junction and Coventry Canals. The construction of the works in this canal was upon the most approved methods in the practice of civil engineering. The bridges and tunnels were made sufficiently capacious to admit of a towing-path on either side and two boats to pass.

Mr. Newdigate was so strongly impressed with the idea that canals were to be the future travelling courses of the world, that he had a communication with the Grand Junction cut right up to his Hall at Arbury; and it is said that upon more than one occasion he had travelled to and from London by boat. This was a piece of good humour about which the late Charles N. Newdigate chose to be silent as much as possible, and when he did speak of it he sought to convey the impression that in cutting it his father had the drainage of his coal mines in view; but among those old Griff miners the story is still current of how "Old Charley's feyther went to Lunnon up the cut."

Perhaps Mr. Newdigate may only have been a few decades in advance of his time, though the incident at that period was certainly one worthy to be noted down by the hand of George Eliot; but having already described the foibles of one member of the family, the gifted novelist probably deemed it prudent to stay her hand. To the commercial interests of Warwickshire, however, canals are of the greatest value; and one cannot think of the many advantages which have been gained to mankind by the use of these well-planned water-courses that glide through our fields and streets, without thanking their constructors, and wondering why the canals are not more generally used.

The little village of Chilvers Coton, in the parish of which George Eliot was born, is about one mile from Griff. In the Conquest survey it was rated at eight hides; the woods were one mile and a half in length, and one mile in breadth; the whole parish being valued at fifty shillings. At the Dissolution, Chilvers Coton came to the Crown, and was sold to John Fisher and Thomas Dalbridgecourt in the fourth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign. These gentlemen, in

1630, obtained a grant of Court Leet to be held there; so that in those days it must have been a somewhat important parish. In course of time Chilvers Coton, along with the village of Griff, came into the hands of the Newdigates.

The Rev. Henry Hake, who died at Leamington some few years ago at a very advanced age, became vicar of Chilvers Coton in 1844, when George Eliot was in her twenty-fifth year, and he may in some particulars have suggested Mr. Gilfil. At that time the population of Chilvers Coton was 2,612, the patron of the living being the Lord Chancellor. Mr. Hake buried his first wife in the little graveyard there, and resigned the living in the spring of 1859.

That Bedworth coal-master who calls George Eliot a "monstrously clever woman," one day met Mr. John Evans, first cousin to Mary Ann, the novelist, who spoke to him to the following effect.

Mr. Evans, who was then foreman at the Griff collieries, the date being some time in 1858, when returning from the pits one evening met Mrs. Newdigate, mother of the late "Old Charley," as the miners always called him, driving along in her carriage. She called to the coachman to stop, and beckoned John Evans to her side.

"Evans," she said, "I have got a book here; it is called 'Adam Bede,' and I want you to take it home and read it to your father."

John Evans replied that his father "dinna tek much account o' books 'cept the Bible;" but if it was the lady's wish that he should read it to his father, he would do so. He did take the book home and began to read it; and so clearly had George Eliot drawn her characters, that the old man, even as his son read, perfectly identified the people in his own neighbourhood, and every now and then called them out by their names.

At Corley, a pretty little village upon an elevation, close to Packington Magna, the ancient seat of the Aylesford family, is to be found "The Hall Farm" in which Martin Poyser took such pride, and at which Adam Bede was always a welcome guest. Indeed, every village within a six-mile ring of Griff is instinct with the life to be found in the works of George Eliot. Which village is "Raveloe" it would be difficult to say, as any one of the pretty cluster to be met with there might pass for it; and though linen-weaving in cottages is almost at an end, the ribbon-weaver is still busy with his tireless loom.

But the stranger amid those interesting scenes, should he by any chance be at fault concerning his next move, must not make the mistake of inquiring for "Cheverel Manor" or "Shepperton," or he will be met with the truly George Eliot reply of "You mun be cum wrong; I hanna heered o' them places."

GEORGE MORLEY.

FOR LOVE OF TONY.

MRS. DEVEREUX had conveyed to Tony by signals the intimation that it was time they thought of going home to their lodgings, and Tony had replied by signs of dissent and an evidently vociferous speech, of which she had not caught one word, that he was not ready yet. He went on with his digging for sand-worms, and she obediently sat down again on the old ship's mast that had found its way to the top of the cliff. She did not open her book again, but rested her chin on her hand, and divided her attention between an in-coming yacht and Tony. The fairy-like craft was making for the little harbour, and she wondered if Tony saw it. They had watched it yesterday, and after tea, as they wandered through the little seaport town, had met two of the sailors, smart fellows with *Irene* embroidered in yellow on the breasts of their blue jerseys.

When the yacht entered the harbour the grave beautiful eyes returned entirely to Tony. She watched him working his way industriously across the wet sand, leaving behind him watery holes, and beside each a raised mound. Surely, she thought, with a little shudder, his worm-can must be full by this time. Not all Tony's contempt and expostulations could make her regard these wriggling creatures with anything but a shuddering pity. And she pitied also the wretched little flat fish that the boy occasionally found on his line, and exhibited, and exulted over, and generally insisted on cooking himself, to the admiration of their landlady.

She looked at her watch again. A quarter to six, and she had ordered tea to be ready at five! She rose to her feet with the intention of waving her handkerchief, when she was startled by the sound of someone coming up the steep path that led up from the harbour. A blue yachting cap first appeared, then the head and shoulders of a man, and finally his whole figure was revealed as he reached the level beside her.

He started as he raised his eyes from the ground to the face of the woman standing there. He lifted his cap, with the surprise in his dark, narrow eyes turning to admiration as he took in the details of that gracious sable-clad figure, and the masses and twists of the coppery hair on which the little black bonnet rested so daintily.

She looked back at him with a puzzled expression in her face, a vague feeling that the dark visage before her was familiar, that somewhere she had seen it before. And as she stood sending her thoughts back to the past, the man came towards her with outstretched hand.

"Mrs. Devereux!"

At the sound of his voice the puzzled look vanished, and her eyes were flooded with an answering recognition.

"Sir Richard! Is it possible?"

"Quite possible! You did not know me—and I knew you at once."

"It is twelve years or more since we met last," she said gravely. "And you have changed, though I can hardly tell you what the change is." She looked at him critically.

"Twelve years of knocking about the world ages a man considerably," he said lightly. "But you do not look one day older, only more——" He bit his lip and stopped suddenly. He had been on the verge of telling her that the promise of beauty in the girl had been more than fulfilled in the woman.

"Ah! you will not say that when you see my big boy."

"Your boy? Of course! you have a son—I remember. Is he living with you?"

"Living with me!" she echoed wonderingly. "Why, I could not live one day without my Tony! He is the very breath of life to me. When he is at school at Ettridge I have rooms near, so that we can always be under the same roof at night."

The man's eyes contracted oddly, and there was something unpleasing in his smile.

"Spoiling him, as you used to spoil poor Devereux's dogs, till they gave up all thoughts of sport to follow you. But come, tell me what has brought you to this out-of-the-way corner of the world?"

"I might ask the same question, Sir Richard. These are Tony's holidays, and we always spend them at some quiet seaside place. We came here a week ago, and intend to stay a month longer. We are both enamoured of this dear little crooked seaport."

"And I came yesterday, and as I climbed that path I was cursing the duty that had brought me here and would keep me another day longer. I little thought to find a friend up on the cliffs."

"Then you leave again to-morrow?"

"Some time to-morrow night. The illness of a relative brought me here. An old uncle who lives in Monk's Hall at the other side of the town. He is better, and there is nothing to keep me after to-morrow."

"Are you living at the Gables still, Sir Richard?"

"I have not set my foot in the place for two years, Mrs. Devereux. A nomadic life suits me best, and the *Irene* and I journey wherever fancy bids us."

"The *Irene*? Then that is your yacht in the harbour! How strange! Tony and I watched her coming in yesterday."

"Ah, if I had only known that!"

He pulled his short black beard, and looked at her with a new light stirring his restless eyes. How lovely she was! In all his

wanderings he had never seen anyone to equal this fair, gracious woman. When he spoke again it was in the abrupt way that was characteristic of him.

"I am years too late in condoling with you over the loss of Drumcovet, Mrs. Devereux."

A quiver passed over her face.

"It is an old story now," she said gently, looking steadily across the quiet sea. "It had to go, you know. There was nothing else for the creditors. Some people in Dublin bought it. I believe it has changed hands again, but I do not know who is the owner now."

"I am, Mrs. Devereux."

"*You!*" The surprise, the almost angry incredulity, in the low tones of her voice brought a quick frown to his face.

"You would rather it had fallen into other hands, Mrs. Devereux?"

"No," she said slowly; then continued quickly: "No; I am not sorry that you possess it. You were my poor Hugh's friend; and the place could not have a better master now than the Devereuxs have lost it for ever."

But for a few moments she could not bear to lift her eyes to the face of the man who had supplanted her boy in the home of his fathers—quaint old Drumcovet, with its precious memories of her gay young Irish husband, its stately gardens and smooth green lawns, where baby Tony had rolled, a white-frocked rollicking baby, an autocrat even then.

Then her generous heart reproached her for her uncordial reception of his news. She held out her hand impulsively.

"Forgive me," she said, with a quiver of her mobile lips. "I must seem ungracious. I am glad the old house has not gone to a stranger. It was my boy's birthplace, and very dear to me."

And then a shrill and prolonged whistle chased the troubled look from her eyes.

"Here is Tony."

And Tony came swaggering up from the shore with his spade on his shoulder and his cap at the back of his rough head, and his eyes and mouth gaping widely at the sight of his mother standing with her hand in that of a tall dark stranger, for Sir Richard let that white hand go reluctantly.

"Tony, dear, this is Sir Richard Barron, an old friend of your father's, and the owner of the yacht we were watching yesterday."

Tony threw down his spade, took off his cap with a flourish, and shook hands, and his frank blue eyes went hastily from the man's face to the yacht in the harbour.

"She's a beggar to go, isn't she, sir?"

"She is," said Sir Richard, smiling and staring down at him intently. "You must make her personal acquaintance. She will be pleased to take you sailing round the point to-morrow, and your mother too—if she will accompany us."

"Thanks; that will be jolly," said Tony, in his most matter-of-fact voice. His mother was surprised at his lack of enthusiasm. Yesterday he had worked himself into a perfect fever of excitement over the beauties of the *Irene*, and now he received Sir Richard's offered kindness with cool and, it seemed to her, almost rude indifference. She looked at him reproachfully.

"Tony will be delighted to go—and so shall I."

"Then we will consider that settled."

Sir Richard was still staring at Tony, making the boy flush and fidget uncomfortably under his gaze, but the blue eyes met the man's dark ones with a certain bold daring in their glance that made Sir Richard's thoughts fly back to his schooldays, when this lad's father had on one occasion knocked him down for ill-using his fag. Sir Richard had never forgiven that blow. He had been outwardly firm friends with the hot-tempered young Irishman until his death, but he had never forgiven him, and the memory of it rose freshly to his mind as he looked at the boyish freckled face of Hugh Devereux's son.

"He is like his father," he said abruptly, removing his gaze, to Tony's intense relief. "He is not a bit like you."

He walked with them to the door of their lodgings, and Mrs. Devereux would have asked him in—indeed, he lingered as though he expected this—but for the peremptory pressure of Tony's fingers upon her arm.

"I'm afraid you make me look quite inhospitable, dear," she said, when Sir Richard had taken a reluctant leave. "You did not want me to ask the poor man in, Tony?"

"I should just think not," said Tony, with a lordly air. "We don't want that big, lanky chap bothering round and spoiling our fun. I thought he was never going, and I'm as hungry as a hunter."

"You were so long on the sand, dear. I was waiting more than an hour for you."

"By Jove, were you?" Tony's voice was full of contrition. "The worms were so scarce. But never mind, motherums; to-morrow I'll fix up a line for you and look after it for you."

"Thank you, Tony," she said, laughing; "I am quite agreeable, but your fishing must wait if we are to go yachting to-morrow."

"Oh, ay!" said Tony carelessly, with a sudden inflection in his voice.

"Why, dearest, I thought you would have been crazy at the prospect of seeing the *Irene*."

"Oh, the *Irene's* all right, and the sail will be first-rate, but——"

"But what, Tony?"

"I don't know exactly," said Tony, rather incoherently. "That fellow Barron has eyes like gimlets, and he has a nasty way of staring at a fellow, you know."

"He can't help his eyes, you fanciful boy; and is it not natural that he would look closely at his old friend's son? He has not seen you since you were a tiny baby."

"Was he a chum of dad's, motherums?" Tony lowered his voice as he mentioned the young father he could only just remember.

"They were at school and college together, and he often came to Drumcovet. He was only Lieutenant Barron then, but came into his title and estates a few years ago. And oh, Tony, what do you think?—he has bought Drumcovet!"

"Beast!"

"Tony!"

"Well, I call him a cad and nothing else," said Tony, raising a scarlet face from the disentanglement of his fishing lines, "to come here crowing over us!"

"I don't think he intended that, Tony," said his mother gravely. "You must not allow yourself to be foolishly prejudiced. Run away and wash your hands, dearest; tea is waiting."

The yachting expedition the next morning was the first of many; for Sir Richard lingered on day after day, with one excuse after another, though his relative was convalescent and there seemed to be nothing to keep him in the little sleepy seaport.

Tony grumbled openly that they were never alone now, that "that fellow" was always coming with them; but he swallowed some of his boyish resentment for the sake of the delights and fascinations of the *Irene*. Mrs. Devereux was full of gratitude to the man who gave such pleasure to her boy. And as she stood on the deck of the *Irene* watching Tony's beaming face as they skimmed over the water, or sat in the dainty saloon, whose background of white panelled walls and green velvet hangings formed such a glorious setting for her gleaming copper-coloured hair and slender black-robed figure, she was unconscious that her host's sombre eyes seldom left her face.

From the day he climbed up the cliff-side and found her standing there he had loved her, and his love had been growing and gaining in intensity day by day. His selfish, cold nature was stirred by her beauty. Her indifference, her friendly composure, the perfect serenity of the grey eyes that met his so frankly, galled his vanity. But he bided his time. He had confidence in himself and his position. But often when those beautiful eyes of hers brightened and glowed when Tony ran up to claim her attention, the man's long brown fingers went quickly up to his beard with the restlessness he always showed when angry, and at those times the expression of his face was not pleasant to see.

At last his homage made itself apparent. The revelation startled Mrs. Devereux, for she was true to the memory of her husband and her passionate love was lavished on her boy. But after the first shock to her feelings—and shock it was to her, though possibly other

women might have felt only elation at the conquest—it dawned upon her that nothing, in a worldly sense, could be more advantageous for Tony than her marriage with a man in Sir Richard Barron's position. All that Tony lacked he could give him, and Tony's future filled her with anxiety. She could manage with her limited income now that he was only a schoolboy; but he could not remain a schoolboy for ever. He must enter one of the universities. It would be a struggle to keep him there at all, but it must be attempted. She thought only of Tony—Tony, who ought to have taken his place amongst his fellows as the owner of Drumcovet. But if she were to marry Sir Richard, even Drumcovet might come to Tony in time. What more natural than that he would restore to the son of his wife—the son of the friend of his youth—some of the boy's lost inheritance? This thought took possession of her mind. What the prodigality of the father had lost the beauty of the mother might win back again.

While she plotted and planned, Sir Richard plotted and planned also. He exulted in the knowledge that he had only to speak and this grey-eyed woman was his. But he knew as well as she did that she would marry him for Tony's sake, and he *hated* him. In most men there is a vein of the untutored savage, and Sir Richard was not a good man by any means. He had hated the father—the hatred extended to the son. He had vowed to himself that this beautiful woman should be his wife. He would be a generous husband, but there must be no Tony in the way. He would brook no rival in his love and home. One thing was certain, he would separate them. It would not be a pleasant task, the wrenching apart of mother and son bound together as these two were; but after his marriage he was grimly determined to accomplish it. Life is full of these domestic tragedies. No wonder that when these thoughts crowded his mind poor Tony often turned away with a feeling of dread that was almost pain when he caught a glance from those inscrutable eyes.

Tony was standing listlessly in the sitting-room window one bright afternoon. His hands were in his pockets, and his blue eyes staring down moodily at the glistening sea. Once he broke into a cheerful whistle, but soon it died away, his lips fell apart, and the lines of his merry mouth were compressed and troubled.

Mrs. Devereux sat at the other end of the room with an open book on her lap, but she was not reading. She was recalling Sir Richard's words as he parted with them at the little gate before dinner. "I will see you in the morning," he had said. "I have a question to ask you; I pray your answer will be favourable." But he knew that it would be; there had been confidence, a look of possession—masterful possession—in the eyes that had met hers. Her wishes were about to be realised, and yet she sighed—she knew not why—and her sigh was echoed by another.

She looked up startled, and the despondent attitude of the boyish figure in the window made her heart grow cold.

"Tony, my dearest! Are you not well?"

Tony straightened himself like a soldier caught in some negligence by his colonel. "I'm all right," he said in a loud, cheerful voice.

She rose hastily and went across to him, and looked anxiously into his face, her own pale with concern.

"Are you sure, dear? Then why are you not out, Tony? Such a glorious afternoon you should not be moping indoors."

Tony answered gruffly that he did not care about going out. He was about sick of the hole, and that was the truth. He sank his hands deeper in his pockets, and stared hard at the sea again.

His mother looked at him for a minute in silence. Then she said quickly:

"Get your cap, dearest, and we will go up to the cliffs, and Mrs. Dare shall send our tea after us."

Her mind was made up. She would take Tony into her confidence. Out of doors it would be so much easier to speak than in the confined little room with the shrill voice of their landlady piercing through the walls.

But it was a harder task than she thought. Half-a-dozen times it was on the tip of her tongue to speak as they climbed up to their favourite nook, but somehow she could not. But when they sat down she braced herself resolutely and said quickly:

"Dearest, have you ever thought that I might marry again?"

Tony was lying on his elbow beside her. He had put up an old tin as a target, and was trying to hit it with stones. When his mother spoke he did not answer at first; he reached out for another pebble, and took careful aim; but it fell wide of the mark.

"Well, Tony?"

"I have—lately," he said deliberately.

"And you were not distressed, Tony? You think with me—that such a step would be admirable for both our sakes?"

"I don't want to think of it at all," said Tony gruffly. His face was scarlet, but he kept it turned from her.

"But you must, my dearest. I am speaking to you frankly. You know your happiness, your welfare, are first with me. You know that, dear one?"

"Mother, *don't*."

The passion in the boy's voice thrilled her; but she said quietly:

"Don't what, Tony?"

"Don't marry *him*."

"Do you mean Sir Richard Barron?"

"Yes, I do. He is a hard, cruel beast, mother. The sailors hate him; he does such cruel things. It makes a lump in my throat when I think of a fellow like that taking *dad's* place. Have you forgotten dad, mother? Dad was a *gentleman*."

The boy raised his head proudly.

"He sneers at your love for me. I've seen him. If I fell over the cliff he'd be jolly glad, for he *hates* me."

"Tony!"

"Yes, he does, mother. I don't care what he does to me, for a fellow's got to grin and bear a lot, and I wouldn't care about anything, darling old motherums, if he would be good to you; but he'll try and make you throw me over, and you won't, and then——" Tony faltered and broke down. He rubbed his hands over his eyes; to his disgust they were wet. He blinked hard and reached out for another stone, but he had not the heart to throw it.

Mrs. Devereux sat staring before her, her eyes dilated with horror. It seemed as though the hand of her boy had torn down a veil from before her vision. She saw now, and she had not seen before. Words and looks that she had passed over with indifference came back to her charged with deadly meaning. From the deep recesses of the past came recollections, forgotten until this moment, that substantiated Tony's words. Yes, this man had been spoken of as cold, cruel, and revengeful; and it was in this man's power that she would have placed the future welfare of her boy.

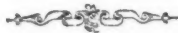
"Tony! Never—never! I was mad, my darling. I thought it would have been for your good, but I was wrong, all wrong!"

She flung her arms round him, and clasped him to her bosom with a passion that defied all earthly powers to separate them.

The next day the *Irene* spread her sails and glided round the cliff bound for the Mediterranean. From their favourite nook Mrs. Devereux and Tony watched her going. Tony kept his eyes fastened on her until she disappeared, then he rose to his feet and threw his cap into the air.

"Hurrah!" he shouted hoarsely; after which he settled down, with a contented face, to the baiting of his fishing-line.

ELIZABETH M. MOON.



HEIDELBERG.

BY CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "IN LOTUS LAND,"
"THE ROMANCE OF SPAIN," ETC., ETC.

AS we approached Heidelberg, after an absence of many years, bygone thoughts, scenes and incidents flashed vividly across the mind, recollections crowding upon each other with strange, almost painful activity.

It seemed but yesterday that we were conversing with Herr Karl, listening to the records of his life, prophesying for him more happiness in the future than he foresaw for himself. And yet Herr Karl had himself passed away into the Unseen and his place knew him no more; his pleasant voice, beautiful eyes, charm of manner—all had disappeared.

Not, however, before our prophecy had come true. Within two years of that soothsaying he had suddenly met his fate and fallen prone at the feet of his earthly goddess.

There descended one day at the hotel a father and daughter, belonging to the old Austrian nobility, but much impoverished. As it happened, Count C—— had been intimate with the father of Herr Karl, and thus a friendly intimacy was at once established that would not have been possible under any other circumstances.

It was love at first sight, both on the part of Herr Karl and of Countess Marguerite. She was one of the loveliest and most amiable of women, and that she should still be unmarried at twenty-six was a wonder to all. Offers had come to her from the most eligible quarters, but she had refused them one after the other, until the world began to say: "Countess Marguerite will never marry."

"I cannot give my hand," she had once said to her perplexed and disappointed father, "unless my affections go with it; and for that I must be able to look up to my husband in every sense of the word. This has never yet happened. When it does, then you may make up your mind to lose me."

And so at twenty-six Countess Marguerite, beautiful as an angel, graceful and gracious, was still to be won.

An unseen Hand marks our destinies; and though we sometimes seem to be drifting aimlessly with the current, that current is leading up to the Divine purpose in our lives. So, by a trifling railway accident somewhat injuring Count C.'s foot and necessitating an enforced rest, the father and daughter found themselves compelled to take up a sojourn in Heidelberg, which they had never intended to

visit. Before they all knew where they were, the mischief was done ; two destinies were sealed.

Count C. was the most indulgent, most yielding of fathers, but when the truth came to his knowledge, his distress was great and his opposition violent. It was the keenest blow his pride had ever received. Whatever Herr Karl's birth might be, no matter what the position held by his father and generations of ancestors, his present calling made him an utterly unsuitable match for his daughter, who had had the highest in the land at her feet. Countess Marguerite was wise, and conquered by not opposing.

"Nothing would ever induce me to marry without your consent and approval," she said to her father, in her low, sweet, persuasive tones, thus throwing oil on troubled waters ; "but I reserve to myself the right of marrying or not as I please, and I feel that if I do not marry Herr Karl I can never marry anyone else."

And then gradually things assumed a different aspect, a fresh form. As we had foretold, Herr Karl was ready to do for love what no other power on earth would have brought about. He placed his position before Count C.

"I am a fairly rich man," he said. "All shall be settled upon my wife. I will retire from my work ; will either realise this business, or place a manager in it, and continue to draw an income from it, though retiring personally from all interference. Wherever you please, I will settle down, in Baden or in Austria. You have no male heir to your own estates—an heir may be born to your daughter. We will settle there if you like, and my moderate wealth shall work wonders in the way of improvement. You know that I am noble by birth, but had dropped my title. That I will resume : and under the circumstances, though your daughter might have made a higher and far more advantageous marriage, at least it could hardly be said that she had made a *mésalliance*. My father's family, Herr Graf, is as ancient and honourable as your own, and my mother, you know, had royal blood in her veins."

The dilemma so stated, what could Count C. say ? He ruminated and pondered, until he began to wonder why he had been so distressed, and so violently opposed to what, after all, seemed anything but a disaster. The idea of keeping his daughter—the only being he possessed on earth to care for—in his own home, was a master-stroke on the part of Herr Karl. He had won his way to the old man's heart, as he won his way to the hearts of all with whom he came into contact. It was something, too, that people would be able to speak of his son as the Herr Baron, and not one of yesterday's creation. Finally, there was his daughter's happiness to be considered—and we have said that he was indulgent and yielding.

When he had arrived thus far on his road, the mists of opposition dispersed, and he saw before him a clear and smiling landscape. He was wise, and accepted it.

The marriage took place. Very soon, Count C. had never been so contented in his life. His son-in-law was the embodiment of all virtues, dear to him almost as his own daughter. When a son and heir was born to them, the old man's cup of happiness overflowed. "Now," said he, "my last earthly wish is gratified. I see our line handed down to posterity. We shall again be great in the land."

Other children came to gladden this favoured pair. They were all in all to each other; everything went well with them; it was as though Heaven had singled them out for special gifts. Prosperity came to them from all sides; our prophecy was more than abundantly fulfilled, as Herr Karl—Baron Karl, as he now was once more—repeatedly assured us in his letters. At the end of ten years they were, if possible, more lovers, more romantically attached to each other than in the first sweet days of their engagement.

Then in one day, when all things seemed brightest, the blow fell.

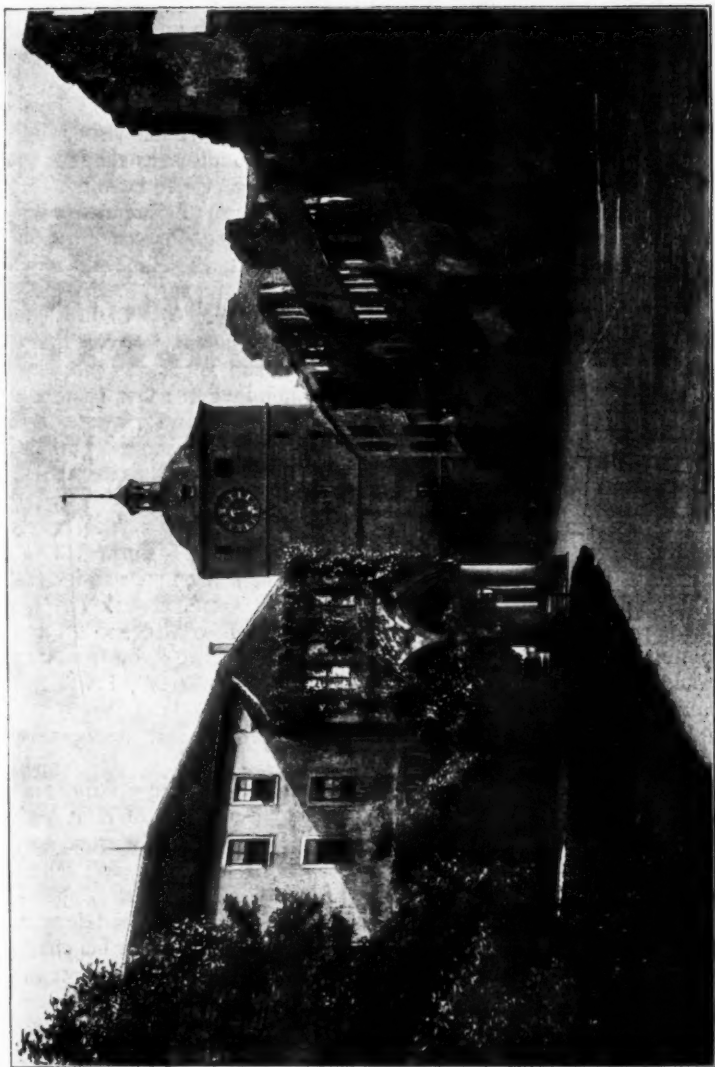
Herr Karl was fifty, yet in all but years he was still in the days of his youth. He had once talked of the weak spot in his health, but it really existed where he suspected it not. Of consumption he was not the victim, but of hidden heart disease.

One day at noon, he and his wife with their two eldest children, were walking through their lovely grounds, revelling in the roses that perfumed the air, rejoicing in the blue sky above them, all that was brilliant and beautiful about them, enumerating their blessings, gazing fondly upon the children that drew them closer together if that were possible. The conversation had taken a retrospective turn, dwelling upon the past.

"And all this might have been lost to us," murmured Herr Karl to his wife, "had your father been an obstinate, relentless man, placing his prejudices and ambitions before all else. As it is, I have had ten years of paradise: a paradise all the sweeter in that it came somewhat late, and wholly unexpectedly. Ten years? It seems but yesterday, dearest one, that we stood at the altar, and were united in that fidelity which was not for time, but to be eternal. Marguerite, beloved, you will outlive me; I feel that I shall go before you into the unseen world; train our children to be the soul of honour; brave and fearless in the path of duty."

A shiver passed through the wife; a sudden presentiment, not of evil, but of the possibility of evil. Such coincidences, warnings, premonitions, forebodings—call them what we will—do happen, not occasionally, but day by day in life.

"Karl, my dearest," said the wife, who had only grown into a more stately and dignified beauty in the decade that had gone by so serenely and harmoniously: "dearest, why these sad thoughts? You are still in your prime, your youth. When your Angel of Death spreads its wings, surely mine will not be far off. You will live to train your children to all that is good and noble, and will see them taking their part in the world as worthy men and women."



THE GREAT ENTRANCE GATEWAY.
(From a photograph by Von König of Heidelberg. This and others by permission.)

She looked up into her husband's face and was startled by a certain peculiar greyness she had never observed there before.

"Karl," she said with sudden alarm, "you feel well? You *are* well? To me you always seem the ideal of health and strength."

"I am not so sure," he returned. "I myself thought I had outgrown all weakness I might once have possessed; but a week ago I was seized with a sudden faintness. It passed off quickly, and I said nothing—thought no more about it. Last night I was visited by a strange dream. My mother came to me, and often as she is in my thoughts, it is singular that I do not remember ever to have dreamed of her before. 'Karl,' she said, 'your time is up. Before to-morrow's sun has scarcely passed its meridian, I shall come for you.' As she spoke she pointed to some closed gates, that, as I looked, rolled back and disclosed a stream of such brilliant light, such divine glory, that I awoke with the overwhelming sensation. My darling," he added, noting his wife's sudden pallor and distress, "it was only a dream. See," taking out his watch, "the sun is past its meridian. It was only a dream, I say; but be the time long or short, some day its fulfilment must come. I wish you to know, Marguerite, that when it does come, I am ready; and on the other shore, where the sea is always at the full and is never broken by turbulent waves, I shall be waiting for you."

At this moment a servant in livery advanced bearing a telegram on a silver waiter. Herr Karl opened it and exclaimed joyfully.

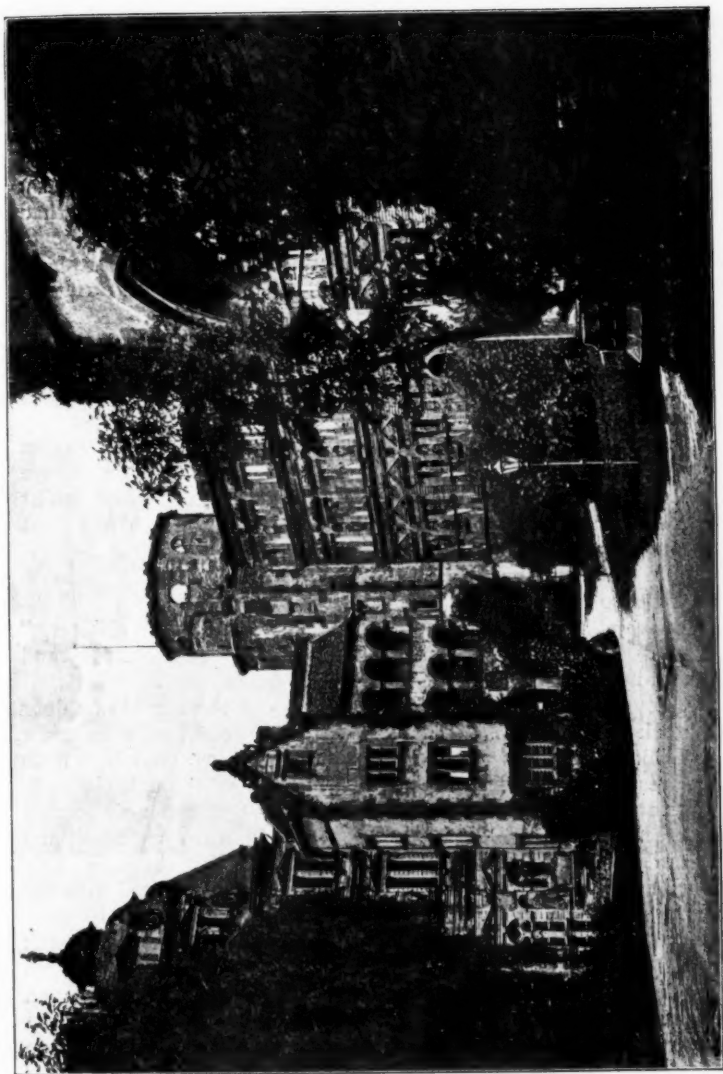
"Good news, Marguerite! Von Königsmark telegraphs to inquire if he and his wife may come to-morrow and spend a week with us. She is your dearest friend, *Frauchen*, whilst he is as a second brother to me. Let me hasten to telegraph that not a week but a month would we have them remain. Await me here, dearest; I will not be a moment."

He ran off with a quick, almost boyish step, and disappeared within the house.

The minutes passed and he did not return. As the children had claimed their mother's attention, she thought nothing of it at first, but when a quarter of an hour had gone by and still he came not, their late conversation flashed upon her with wild force, and seized with a nameless dread and horror she hurried within doors.

Her husband was seated at his desk in his study; the telegram had been written and despatched; he was leaning back in his chair, his wide-open beautiful blue eyes strained on space, on his face an expression of indescribable rapture. But the soul of Herr Karl had fled for ever from earth, and it was evident that it has gone into no dark and unknown land.

Many months after the sad event we received all these details from Baroness Marguerite, whom we had seen only once when they had visited England together some years after their marriage; but she had accepted her husband's friend as her own,



COURTYARD AND WELL-HOUSE.
(From a photograph by Von König.)

and there are friendships on which absence has no weakening influence. In that letter she told us how, though happiness was dead, she was holding on her way bravely for the sake of her children, and though in the solitude of her room she often sat with Sorrow for her companion, she was ever brave and cheerful amidst her household.

These and many other thoughts and recollections crowded upon us as we again approached Heidelberg after many years. In reviving old impressions, should we discover that we had changed? That the subtle essence of early youth had evaporated, and the world had taken away that joy which the world never gave? But a truce to sentiment. The clear, practical voice of the arum lily broke in upon our meditations as the train steamed into the old station. That, at least, seemed to have undergone little change.

"I have been talking to you for the last five minutes," said E. rather severely, "and you haven't paid the slightest attention to me. I feel very much neglected. You have been dreaming, dreaming, dreaming, just as though your astral body had wandered away up to the stars. Since you would not make up your mind, I have quite decided that it will be wisest to go to the Schloss Hotel up above the town. The town itself would be suffocating in this heat, whilst on the heights we shall not only have fresh air but one of the most glorious views in the world."

"But you have never been to Heidelberg," we objected; "how do you know so much about it?"

"It is not necessary to come to Heidelberg to know Heidelberg," returned E. "I feel as well acquainted with the place, actually and historically, as though I had lived here."

Of course E. had her way, and when a porter threw open the door and took possession of our personal property, we bade him make for the Schloss omnibus. We were its only passengers and had it to ourselves. In a very few minutes we were rattling through the well-known streets and thoroughfares, in which, at a first glance we seemed to detect little change. Lights gleamed from many a window, and the gardens of the hotels were bright with lamps that shone like pale moons amidst the trees. Above, the skies were illuminated with the stars.

Very soon we had left the town behind us. In the darkness it seemed an endless drive, a tremendously steep ascent. Even with their light load, the horses appeared to find it very hard work, and needed a good deal of encouragement from the coachman. Darkness exaggerates, and the impression was that we were ascending into cloudland. But we reached the hotel at last, and were dazzled with the flood of light that suddenly streamed upon us through the open doors.

All this was new to us. Years ago there had been no Schloss Hotel, and the very ghosts would have appealed against such desecra-

tion. The spot on which it now stood had formed part of the forest in which the nightingales sang and the owls hooted. Now it was too probable that the nightingales had fled for ever from the neighbourhood and betaken themselves to groves less haunted by man.

No doubt, also, Elizabeth had ceased to appear on the castle terrace, or the Trompeter von Säkkingen to serenade his princess; and it might well be that in place of them, old Fritz, the lean and shadowy gate-keeper, haunted it in righteous anger. He had long passed over into Spirit land: had lived just long enough to rejoice in Herr Karl's happiness and good fortune and lament his departure. That departure had been his death-blow. It requires a very small blow to end the scene when eighty years have struck upon the gong of life; and faithful Fritz had quietly laid himself down and yielded up his soul to his Creator, dying at his post like a good soldier. A new custodian soon reigned in his stead, but being of a sceptical turn of mind, if the terrace was still ghost-haunted, he saw them not. Other custodians had in turn succeeded him.

We stood on the hotel terrace—not the castle terrace, nor anything half so romantic and poetical—that night of our arrival, looked out upon the dark world, and imagined the scene. Far below us were the lights of the town, and here and there lights flashed upon the river. We were above the castle, which was shrouded in impenetrable gloom, no trace or outline of it visible. Not a sound disturbed the air. The time for the nightingales had passed, but had it been the merry month of May, instead of hot and stifling July, still we felt the nightingales would not sing here. In place we imagined the loud laughter of visitors from the four quarters of the globe; a disturbing element banishing all beautiful dreams and visions. We dimly traced the outlines of the hills, the skies and the stars rising above them. Behind us was the commonplace hotel, filled with commonplace visitors, who for the most part had no soul to stretch out hands towards these inestimable and ineffable glories of nature.

It was not until early the next morning that they again dazzled us with their splendour. Then we saw, after many years, the wonderful scene that had so impressed Herr Karl, and caused him to ask if earth held anything finer: a scene almost sufficient to cause what Mrs. Browning calls "a great apocalypse of soul." How well we remembered it! Only yesterday, as it seemed, we had gazed upon it all, day after day, sometimes alone, sometimes with Herr Karl, whose friendship had become our greatest link with Heidelberg, sometimes with others, who were friends and acquaintances in lesser degree. Yet many years had passed, and the world had changed, and nothing was as it had been; dreams had been dreamed out, illusions had vanished, hopes were dead. We were face to face with Realities; poetical possibilities had given place to stern, relentless Duty. And yet the interval seemed but a span long. And when

the final end of all comes to each of us probably the longest life will appear no longer than a "Sabbath day's journey."

It was a glorious, cloudless day, as we stood in the early morning upon the hotel terrace. The sun shone brilliantly, gilding everything with its splendour. We were high above the town and the little world at our feet, but higher yet around us rose the wooded hills. In front of the terrace, on a somewhat lower level, but not very far off, stood out the matchless ruin of Heidelberg Castle, still surrounded by its groves and trees, as in the days of old. The innovations that had taken place were invisible from this point. At one end the Octagon tower was conspicuous, at the other, the square tower of the grand gateway with its slanting roof: High above it all the magnificent hills stretched far away. Below lay the sleeping town, and flashing in the sunlight was the river, spanned by the picturesque bridges. Far beyond all stretched the grand historical plain, through which the Rhine ran its romantic course, and into which the Neckar presently yielded up its life.

It was Sunday morning. The town was preparing to be gay and lively, after the Continental fashion: a special Sunday, demanding flags in the streets, many of which were already flying and flapping in the breeze. The atmosphere was clear, the colouring brilliant; bells were ringing, and the air seemed full of sound. As the morning went on, bands of students went about the town in straggling groups or linking arms together, singing songs with choruses of loud laughter, just as in the years gone by. Many a gashed face drew attention to the fact that duelling still survived, and was popular as ever.

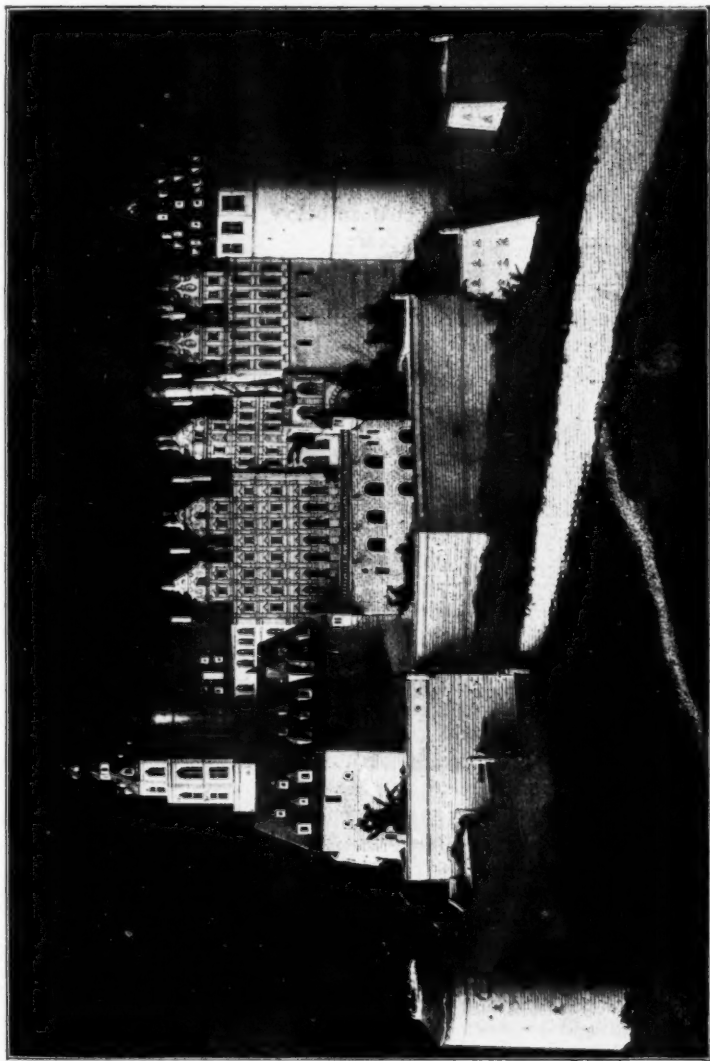
The special occasion demanding so much flag-flying and student display—though the latter was not much more than usual—was a grand parade and gathering together of the veterans who had taken part in the war of '66, and were to-day assembling at Heidelberg from all parts of the country. Of course a good deal of childishness was mixed up with the affairs, or it would not have been German.

But all this was to take place in the afternoon. It was yet early morning, as we stood on the terrace, and there was no sign of the dissipation to come, excepting the waving flags which gave the old town so festive an appearance.

As soon as possible, when few people were as yet abroad, we made our way to the old Castle.

Once more we found ourselves in front of the grand gateway, but alas there was no Fritz to receive us, and no Herr Karl to reprove the "Herr Baron" that the old custodian found it so difficult to keep back.

As we passed under the gateway and stood in the great court beyond the well-house—whose graceful columns were brought from Charlemagne's palace at Ingelheim by Count Palatine Ludwig—where once we had stood with Herr Karl in the lights and shadows



HEIDELBERG CASTLE IN THE DAYS OF ELIZABETH.
(From a photograph by Von König.)

thrown by the moon, but where now the brilliant sunshine reigned, we seemed surrounded by the ghosts of bygone days and centuries.

Here in the thirteenth century the first foundations of the Castle were laid by Count Palatine Rudolph I.—up to which time Heidelberg had been a fief of the Bishop of Worms. The electors Palatine were of ancient lineage, claiming descent from Charlemagne and Attila, and it is through them that our own royal family trace their descent from these renowned warriors. The family came into prominence under the Carlovingian Kings, when it was invested with the office of Count Palatine Comptroller, Seneschal of the royal household. He built a new château below the old castle, all traces of which have long since disappeared.

At the close of the fourteenth century Rupert III. added to and improved it, so that it ranked as an imposing building. He it was who erected the Rupert's building on the left, which many would consider the most beautiful and romantic part of the Castle, though by no means the grandest and most conspicuous. Rupert was elected Roman King at Rhens in 1400.

Succeeding electors all added to the building, but more especially Frederick V., the unfortunate King of Bohemia, who wished to make it a residence worthy of his wife, the unhappy Elizabeth, daughter of James I., and, therefore, direct ancestress of Queen Victoria. Frederick was very much in love with Elizabeth, and would have laid the world at her feet had it been possible. It has been said that it was she who persuaded Frederick to accept the crown of Bohemia, the cause of all their subsequent misfortunes. Again it has been affirmed that she in no way influenced his decision, and this one would like to believe. Certain it is that had they been content with Heidelberg, their lives might have passed in delightful happiness and repose. But an evil fate seemed ever to pursue the Stuarts and none escaped it.

In the days of Frederick V. the Castle was a very charming residence, and one feels that life spent amidst such entrancing beauties might have been as one long dream of paradise.

Frederick the Victorious had strongly fortified the Castle, and Lewis V. had enlarged it. Otto Henry added his part in 1556, which was considered the finest example of Renaissance architecture in Germany. The building was lofty and the front decorated with extreme richness. It formed the whole—or nearly so—of the north side, and contained the Chapel, which still remains. Beyond this was the Altan, the castle balcony or Elizabeth Terrace, as it has been called, overlooking the town, where we had once stood through part of a night with Herr Karl listening to the nightingales; and where old Fritz declared he had seen the ghost of Elizabeth, and heard the phantom horn of the phantom Trompeter von Säckingen.

Following upon him came Frederick V. who reigned here from 1610 to 1621.

In the Thirty Years' War the Castle suffered considerably. Tilly captured it in 1622. Carl Ludwig restored it, and during his long reign did much to enable the country to recover from that long and disastrous war. Carl died in 1685, and then Louis XIV., claiming the Palatinate, began that cruel and relentless struggle, which involved so many in ruin and spared not the old Castle. On October 24th, 1688, the town capitulated to Mélac the French General, who took up his abode here for the winter: then played a disgraceful part. In March, 1689, on the approach of the German armies, he fled, but first blew up the fortifications and burnt down the Castle.

Forty years later it was rebuilt by the Elector Carl Philip, but was struck by lightning in 1764 and was again ruined. A vast ruin—the most splendid in Germany, if not in the whole world. It is now undergoing restoration; a mere restoring of the walls: whereby much of its charm must disappear; for relentless Time whilst destroying also beautifies, and the new faces and sharp outlines can never possess the romantic and poetic splendour of crumbling walls.

Rudolph I. laid the foundations of the castle that was to become so historical and world-famed.

The family came into prominence under the Carovingian Kings, when it was invested with the hereditary office of the Count Palatine Comptroller, Seneschal of the royal household. The Palsgraves originally had their seat at Aix-la-Chapelle; but the eleventh century found them settled in the country bordering the Rhine, called the Palatinate, and which by observing the law that "they should take who have the power, and they should keep who can," grew into an extensive Principality, which has ever been one of the most flourishing in the empire.

The first dynasty came to an end in the person of the unfortunate Prince Hermann, Count of Scheyren, who, incurring the displeasure of the Emperor Frederick I.—our old friend Barbarossa—was deprived of his estates and condemned to carry dogs on his shoulders for the rest of his days: a punishment—cruel enough—he escaped by retiring to a monastery. Frederick granted the Palatinate to his step-brother Conrad of Suabia, who was succeeded by a son of Henry the Lion.

The Palatinate was united to Bavaria in the person of Otto of Wittelsbach, who has been generally considered the founder of its prosperity. He made Heidelberg the capital, a privilege it retained for six centuries. On his death his eldest son Rodolphus, who was married to an English princess, succeeded to the Palatinate with the electoral privilege, and Louis the younger son took possession of Bavaria. Soon after he contested the imperial crown with Frederick the Fair, Duke of Austria, whom Rodolphus supported. Louis obtained the crown, and punished the unbrotherly Rodolphus by putting him to the ban of the empire. Deprived of home and

lands he fled to England, his wife's native country. Thus we see that Frederick V. was not the first elector to whom an English wife seemed to bring misfortune.

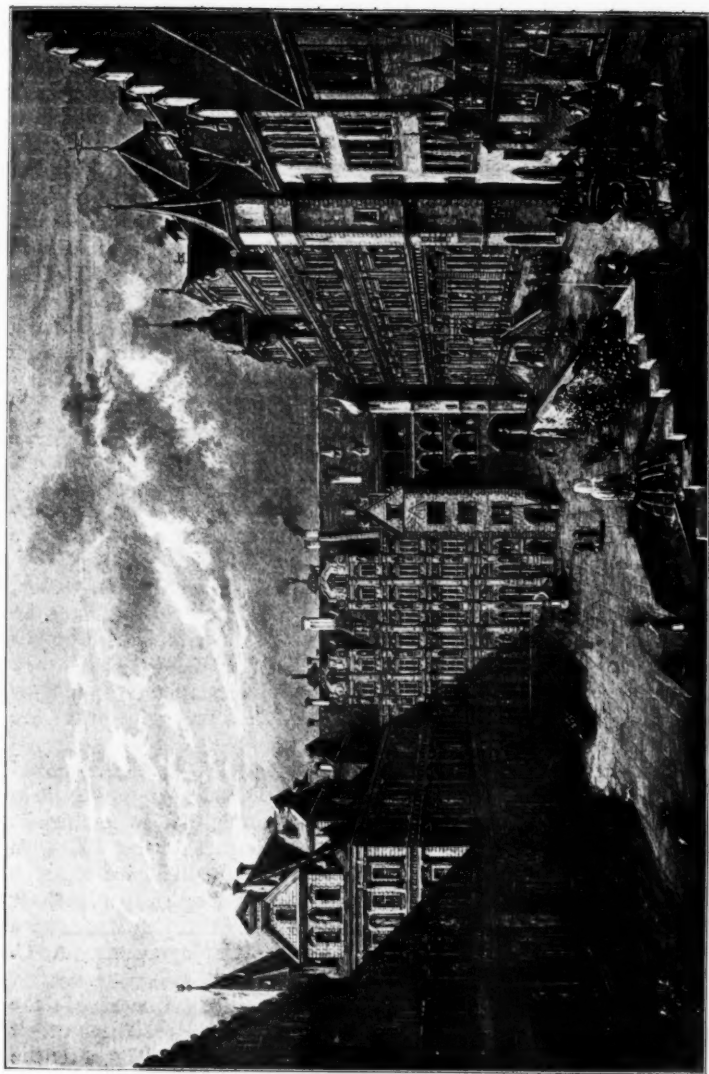
Owing to the mediation of his mother Matilda, who during a banquet in the Castle of Heidelberg presented the three sons of Rodolphus as suppliants, Louis relented and invested his eldest nephew with the Palatinate; adding a condition, which afterwards provided more cause for dissensions, that the electoral privilege should be exercised by the Bavarian and Palatine princes alternately; a condition afterwards revoked by the Emperor Charles IX. in return for a part of the upper Palatinate.

So it frequently happens that monarchs exercise clemency at the risk of their own safety and of future peace: a fact that may in part condone many a so-called act of cruelty: such for instance as the execution of Mary Queen of Scots—and many another instance which might easily be cited. The murder of Charles by Cromwell one cannot hold to be one of them, for Charles might have been banished to France, and all his possible plans and plots would have done no more harm than the plans and plots of Charles II. at a later date. Of course it may be objected that we survey the scene from the light of history—it is easy to be wise after the event—but Cromwell must have felt quite capable of coping with Charles and his machinations beyond the seas. He may possibly have dreaded the influence of Henrietta Maria, who still retains much of the beauty and dignity that had so eminently distinguished her, and, later on, so completely forsook her. That Charles was not the false friend and despicable character he has been represented may be taken for granted by the immense following he had, and his being so generally considered a martyr.

The three brothers reigned in turn. Rupert I. was the youngest of the three, and founded the University in 1386, taking that of Paris as his model.

The electors quickly succeeded each other and in 1400 Rupert III. sat on the Imperial throne and built that fine part of the castle called Ruprechtsbau. He had command of the Imperial coffers and was far richer than his predecessors. His son, Louis III., married Blanche, daughter of Henry IV. of England, and in this instance no misfortune seems to have followed the English union.

Louis, who was narrow-minded and a great bigot, presided at the Court of Constance when those two great reformers John Huss and Jerome of Prague were condemned to death. Yet when it suited his purpose, he did not scruple to act as jailor to Pope John XXIII. at Heidelberg: one of the triple popes who fought so long for the triple crown. It is true that Pope John was a very despicable character, and one can have very little sympathy with him during his four years' captivity in the Castle—an ideal prison. At the end of that time he managed through bribery to regain his freedom, ate



HEIDELBERG CASTLE IN THE DAYS OF ELIZABETH.
(From a photograph by Von König.)

humble pie in submitting himself to Martin V. the then reigning pope, was taken into favour by him and made cardinal-bishop of Frascati, an honour he only lived a few months to enjoy.

Louis V., a direct descendant of Louis the Bigot, who reigned from 1508 to 1544, also improved and enlarged the Castle; restored Ruprechtsbau, built new fortifications, and added a wing of which only the crumbling Ludwigs-Thurm remains: the rest having been pulled down by Otto Heinrich to make room for his own building.

Otto Heinrich is one of the most interesting rulers during the Reformation, was one of the first to declare himself in favour of Luther's teachings, and well deserved to be called Henry the Wise. His journal is still extant in which he describes his pilgrimage to the Holy Land: in remembrance of which he had two carpets woven with representations of Palestine. One may be seen at Munich (Otto Heinrich was the founder of that famous Library) and the other at Neuburg. He was the last of his line, and Frederick III. of Simmern succeeded to the Palatinate, and marked an important era in its history by accepting the tenets of Calvin.

Heidelberg was now the stronghold of Protestantism, and the refuge of fugitive Huguenots. The university, frequented by all the learned men of the age, was in a flourishing condition. During the disturbances that took place all over Germany after the Reformation, the electors had remained neutral; Charles V. had been specially merciful towards the Palatinate, and the country was in a more prosperous state than any of its neighbours.

Amongst the Huguenots to whom Heidelberg afforded protection, was Charlotte de Montpensier of the Royal House of Bourbon, who had been specially confided to the care of Frederick III. She left this home to become the wife of William of Orange, and their daughter Juliana was destined to be the mother of unhappy Frederick V., and to live to witness the ruin of the home that once sheltered her mother.

Frederick III. and his successor, Frederick IV., greatly improved the Castle—the building of Frederick IV. completing the great quadrangle: but it was Frederick V. who brought it to its highest state of perfection. He it was who constructed the “English building” for his beloved Elizabeth, in which the influence of Inigo Jones may be traced. He laid out the “English garden” for Elizabeth's delight, and built the triumphal arch that still stands with its inscription: “*Fredericus V. Elizabethæ. Conjugi Cariss, A. C. MDCXV. F. C.*”

At the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War all building ceased; the tide turned; Heidelberg had had its day; ruin and decay began their work. In 1622 the Castle was attacked and taken by Tilly, after the brave resistance of its English garrison. The Castle was left little better than a ruin, the parks were destroyed, and the Bavarian soldiers committed every species of ravage. Tilly caused the greater

part of the Palatine Library to be transported to the Vatican, some found its way to Munich, and much was lost. This famous library, founded by Otto Heinrich, was the most complete collection of books and MSS. relating to the Protestant cause in existence. The Elector of Bavaria wished the whole of it to be transferred to his palace at Munich, but the Pope, too glad to get many of these silent witnesses against him out of sight, would not allow them to leave the safe keeping of the Vatican. In 1798, however, the tables were turned, when a great part of the Vatican Library, including the Palatine MSS. was carried to Paris by the French. Later, part was restored, and in 1815 the Palatine collection found its way back to Heidelberg.

In 1621 Ferdinand had issued an edict of proscription against Frederick V., in which he was declared guilty of treason against the Empire and sentenced to the forfeiture of all his dignities and possessions: the task of reducing the Palatinate was assigned to Spain: a task almost accomplished by Spinola and completed by Tilly. We have seen what was the fate of Heidelberg.

This edict of proscription was of course absolutely illegal, as according to a provision of the "Golden Bull"—Germany's Magna Charta—no elector could be deprived of his title and estate, save by a General Diet of the Empire. Frederick also was obviously not guilty of treason against the Empire, for when he accepted the crown of Bohemia in 1618, the revolt was over: the people of Bohemia alone were concerned in their rebellion.

Frederick's only crime was failure—the worst of all crimes in the eyes of the world: failure chiefly owing to the base desertion of his Protestant allies, headed by his father-in-law, James I.; an utterly incomprehensible proceeding, for, as events turned out, the German Protestants had all to gain and nothing to lose by uniting to support Frederick. It is also true that Frederick had not the necessary mental qualities to rule the people of Bohemia, and his acceptance of the throne was the fatal act of his life.

In 1624 Ferdinand sought to legalise his edict of proscription and convened a diet to assemble at Ratisbon. James I., the most befooled and incompetent monarch it was ever England's fate to possess, urged Frederick to await the Emperor's mercy; but his eyes were ruthlessly opened when—although the electors of Saxony and Brandenburg kept away purposely to illegalise the proceedings—the Diet recognised the ban under which Frederick had been placed, and forthwith bestowed the Palatinate, including the electoral dignity, on Maximilian of Bavaria.

James I. has indeed much to answer for. Owing to his extraordinary blindness, he persisted in indulging hopes of a Spanish alliance, and refused to support Frederick and the Protestant cause. Owing to his refusal, the Protestant Princes of Germany also withdrew in fear and trembling, a course they had afterwards bitter reason to

regret. Had James pursued a firm policy, sent troops and money to Frederick, and exhorted the Protestant Princes to remain firm, Ferdinand would have been easily overcome, for he was already in a very weak state, and the Protestant cause would have maintained its ascendancy: an ascendancy lost through want of a little exertion, and never since regained.

When James at length roused himself, it was only to indulge his incurable vanity in useless negotiations, for which he fancied he possessed a genius, and his eyes were not opened until, on the brink of death, he received the decision of the Diet at Ratisbon.

James, however, was not wholly bad, and on his deathbed showed that he possessed a few sparks of paternal feeling. Stricken with remorse, he bade Charles, "as he hoped for a parent's benediction, and that of Heaven, to exert all his powers in order to reinstate his sister and her children into their dominions: for," said he, "it was my mistake to seek the Palatinate in Spain." But poor Charles, amidst other weaknesses, inherited his father's propensity for negotiation, and thus failed to do any good.

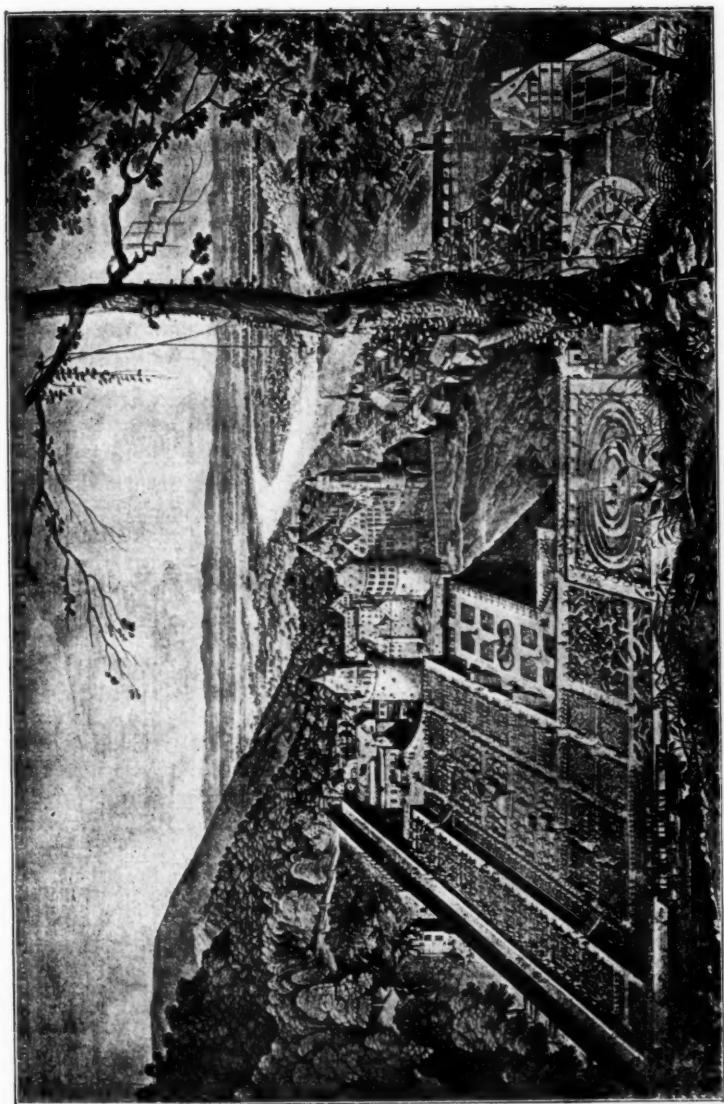
Heidelberg changed hands many times during the Thirty Years' War. In 1632 it was taken by the Swedes; in 1634 was besieged by the Bavarians; and the following year was taken by the Imperial troops. At the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Charles Louis, son of Frederick V.—who had died in 1632, a few days after Gustavus, of a fever aggravated by grief and disappointment on hearing of that sad event—was reinstated in the Lower Palatinate, but shorn of the electoral dignity, which, with the Upper Palatinate, remained with the Duke of Bavaria.

The Palatinate was now in a terrible condition; the Castle was more or less in ruins, and the land was utterly devastated.

Charles Louis has been accused—and justly—of meanness, but a little allowance must be made for the state in which he found his dominions, whilst great praise must be awarded for the fact that in less than nine years the Palatinate was restored to its former prosperity.

It is fortunate one can make this allowance for Charles Louis, for otherwise his character was not an enviable one. When the civil wars broke out in England, Charles actually submitted to the Parliament, apologised for the conduct of his brothers Rupert and Maurice in siding with the King, their uncle; offered to the Parliament his free aid and service, assuring them his heart was faithfully devoted to their cause—and all this to obtain a pension, which was granted to him after some delay.

With what feelings Elizabeth viewed his conduct may be imagined. When he took possession of the Palatinate in 1648, Elizabeth, who for nearly thirty years had been living solely on the bounty of the Dutch, wished to return to her dower town, Frankenthal, but Charles put such obstacles in her way that she had to remain in Holland, whilst,



ELIZABETH'S GARDEN.
(From a photograph by Von König.)

with unfilial conduct that was inexcusable, he refused to discharge her debts. Her allowance had not been continued by the States—or only a small portion of it—when Charles succeeded to his inheritance, as, naturally, he was then responsible for his mother's maintenance; but so small and irregular was the stipend he allowed her that she could not avoid incurring liabilities. Charles behaved with such meanness to his brother Rupert that he vowed never again to set foot in the Palatinate—and he never did.

In 1689 and in 1693 Heidelberg again suffered severely at the hands of the French. In 1685, Charles, the son of Charles Louis, died, and with him died the line of Simmern.

He was succeeded by a prince of the Neuburg line, and his son, John William, took part in the War of the Spanish Succession, and in 1694 received the Upper Palatinate with all the ancient rights of his house. But at the conclusion of the war both were restored to the elector of Bavaria.

In 1742 the Neuburg line came to an end, and the Lower Palatinate was inherited by Charles Theodore of the Sulzbach line.

In 1777 the male line of Bavaria became extinct, and then, in accordance with the Treaty of Westphalia, which stipulated that in such a contingency the Upper Palatinate and the electoral dignity were to revert to the electors Palatine, Charles Theodore was reinstated in all the honours of his ancestors. In 1801, by the Treaty of Lunéville, the Palatinate was again divided, and Heidelberg became part of the Grand Duchy of Baden, where it has ever since remained. In 1848 was held the great Heidelberg Assembly, at which steps were taken towards the German Revolution of that year. The famous Heidelberg Catechism was compiled in 1563, under the guidance of Frederick III., surnamed the Pious, by Caspar Olevian and Zacharias Ursinus, and became the standard of the Swiss Church. The Zurich Catechism was founded upon it in 1639.

Thus we see that the historical atmosphere surrounding Heidelberg Castle is of extreme interest, taking us back to the Middle Ages, with all their charm and power, and to ages yet earlier.

The town itself possesses few ancient traces. On the last occasion that it was sacked by the French—in 1693—it was so completely destroyed that only one single house was left standing. And it still stands; an old-fashioned, curiously-decorated house in the Market-place, now used as an inn. How many a tale could it unfold! In 1720 Charles Philip removed his Court to Mannheim, and Heidelberg ceased to be a royal residence.

No wonder that we wandered about the Castle and its precincts, lost in dreams: reviving the recollections and impressions of our own early youth, and going back in spirit to those feudal times, those great middle ages, which now seem to us of this prosy nineteenth century, so full of chivalry and romance, of power and achievement.

Standing on the haunted terrace—Elizabeth's terrace—haunted, if

we were to believe old Fritz—there, in front of us, on the other side of the Neckar, rose the vine-clad Heiligenberg; vine-clad up to a certain height, then wooded, the summit crowned by the ruins of an old chapel. Half way up the hill the famous *Philosophenweg* runs to the suburb of Neuenheim, where the Neckar valley ceases and the river flows through quiet plains, until, twelve miles away, it falls into the Rhine.

All the churches are visible from this terrace: the Peterskirche which was built in 1392, where in 1460 Jerome of Prague preached the Reformed doctrines, though he never actually took orders.

Jerome was the friend and disciple of John Huss, and to this fact owes much of his fame. More accomplished than Huss, he was less conspicuous for that tremendous moral force which made Huss's power and influence over men overwhelming. Though no actual proof remains, Jerome is supposed to have been both learned and intellectual; but he was impulsive, and though bold and courageous, was given to moments of weakness and fear. In one of these moments, after a close confinement of some months in Constance, which no doubt had affected his health, when brought before a public session of the Council, he retracted his reformed views in favour of the errors of Romanism, especially denying the tenets of Wycliffe, whose teaching and writings had so influenced him during his sojourn at Oxford in 1396; and of John Huss his beloved friend and master. But eight months afterwards, in May, 1416, he boldly and solemnly went back from that retraction, and declared that no sins committed since his youth had weighed so heavily on his mind or caused him such keen remorse as the sin he had committed when pretending to approve of the iniquitous sentence given against Wycliffe and against the holy martyr John Huss. Two days afterwards he went fearlessly to the stake, with a firm tread and cheerful countenance, and bade the executioner light the fire before his face. His ashes, like those of John Huss, were thrown into the Rhine.

But Constance and not Heidelberg was the scene of Jerome's martyrdom. Heidelberg, however, as a strong defender and upholder of the Reformed faith plays a prominent part in that great and momentous religious battle of the middle ages. And it was whilst expounding the Reformed doctrines in the Peterskirche in Heidelberg to an ever-increasing following, that he began to be a marked figure to those who were on the side of Romanism.

Although Jerome had not the moral weight of John Huss, he yet was a leader of men. His manner was charming, his voice persuasive, his eyes flashed with the fire of devotion. He was thoroughly in earnest; convincing because himself convinced. It is true, he had his moments of weakness and fear; we have seen him renounce his faith; but that weakness was due to physical defect rather than moral cowardice. John Huss was a far more powerful man, to whom the thought of physical suffering was as nothing. But Jerome finally

triumphed over all, and once his moral strength gathered up, no thought of bodily suffering could ever again move him. "I have no fear," he said to the executioner, as he bade him light the fires for his martyrdom. "If I had the least fear I should not be standing in this place."

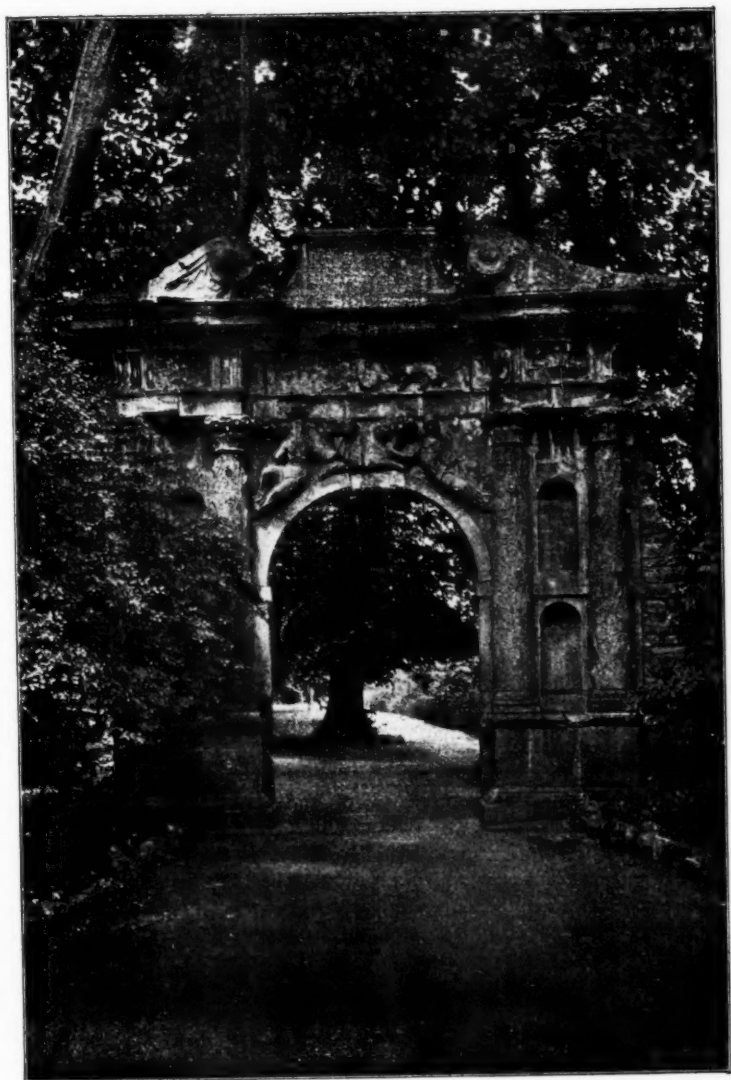
It was impossible not to think of all this as we looked down from the terrace upon the old Peterskirche, and to fancy that we heard the low convincing tones of Jerome echoing within its walls, now raised in passionate declamation, now falling to the faintest whisper that yet reached every one of his hearers, thrilling them to the utmost: but whether loud or soft, condemning or pleading, ever eloquent and persuasive.

Not far from the Peterskirche, too, was the old University that sprang into life about the same time, and was the nursery of so many of those great and eloquent men. For it is the oldest University in the kingdom. The form of its Charter was almost identical with that of Vienna, whilst it was constructed after the type of Paris, had four faculties and numerous privileges.

Though founded by the Elector Palatine, Rupert I. in 1356—just nine years before Jerome first saw the light of day—it was not until 1386, when Pope Urban VI. gave it the papal sanction, that its importance began. Therefore when at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Jerome was prosecuting his crusade, he had amongst his audience some of the most learned professors of the time, including Marselius von Inghen, and many of the University's most earnest students: youthful minds and awakening intellects whom he was influencing to carry on his work when his own voice should become silent. For even in those days Jerome realised the risk he ran, and knew how possible it was that the martyr's death awaited him.

The University was destined to flourish in the hands of its patrons; Frederick the Victorious, Philip the Upright, and Louis V. taking it into their especial favour. As we have seen, it became a great stronghold of Protestant learning, embracing all the tenets of the Reformation. When the Heidelberg Catechism was drawn up by its distinguished theologians, it was at the zenith of its fame, having gone on from age to age prospering. Then the Thirty Years' War, with its miseries and persecutions, brought it almost to ruin. At the Peace of Lunéville in 1801, it was further shorn of its endowments; but in 1803 Charles Frederick reconstructed it under the name of "Ruperto-Carolina:" and once more it flourishes, this time possibly fairly beyond the influence of chance and change.

A large proportion of its students are English and American: and who can wonder at their choosing a spot so romantic in which to pass a year or two of student life? Who that has done so can ever forget or quite shake off the dream-influence of Heidelberg? It clings to him through all his days with a feeling of having once lived in paradise, and in later years he will give many a sigh and many a



ELIZABETH'S GATEWAY.
(From a photograph by Von König.)

wish for a return of that golden age. It all lives in the memory as a dream-existence. And if the students spend less time than is advisable in poring over dry subjects, and produce construes defective in fancy, it is certain that they can plead such an excuse as no other university possesses—the incomparable charm and beauty of Heidelberg, where nature and art seem to have combined in producing one of the most beautiful and most romantic of earthly scenes.

The University Library was founded by Otto Heinrich in the first instance, and was again taken in hand and augmented in 1703. It is of great richness, both as to books and MSS. The first Rector of the University, Marselius von Inghen, might almost be regarded as its real founder, for to his splendid abilities and untiring energy Heidelberg owed much of its early success: a success more rapid and permanent than that of any other mediæval University, and unaccompanied by those crises to which so many of them were subjected.

It is a very ugly and commonplace building to-day, this University, but that is only in its exterior aspect: within, it is beautiful, from an intellectual point of view, with its rich store of volumes and precious MSS. It is also the oldest of the University libraries. So important had it become in 1608, that Scaliger wrote of it: "*Locupletior est et meliorum librorum quam Vaticana.*" In the very first year of its existence—its *papal* existence, 1386—it numbered 579 students.

To-day these students of a world grown older by six centuries, seemed ubiquitous. They went about in bands, and from different parts of the forest invisible choruses and part-songs rose upon the air. The heat of the day was intense, the sunshine dazzling, and in the afternoon the railway took us up the mountain side and landed us at Molkencur, 1,000 feet above the level of the sea. Here we seemed to command the world. The scene we looked upon was matchless. The old castle stood out quite far down, enshrined in its forest of trees: yet lower and very far off indeed, very placid and peaceful, the Neckar wound its silvery course, spanned by the old bridge that Karl-Theodore built in 1786—for it is no older than that, and has nothing to do with the mediæval history of the city. It is not even as old as the famous Great Tun, which has been in the Castle vaults since 1751, and is capable of holding 50,000 gallons of wine—and has been filled more than once. A large proportion of the students are far more interested in the old Tun than in the Castle ruins; but, alas, its days of usefulness and glorification have also come to an end. The students' mouths may water when they measure its capacities with admiring eyes—it can yield them no more wine.

Molkencur was very crowded that afternoon. It is a restaurant, on a sort of Swiss-Chalet system, surrounded by arbours and gardens. Here people come chiefly to drink beer—what would the Germans do without that beloved beverage?—and they sit at small tables and touch glasses, and look into each other's eyes and swear eternal friendship, these unromantic-looking Germans, with their coarse

features and plebeian faces ; and when they have finished one bottle or bock, they call for another—like Mynheer van Dunck : though the latter preferred schnapps to beer, and let those who would, call for the heavier article.

We could not say very much for the people of Heidelberg. Nature had not been as bountiful to them as to her own hills and valleys : and we thought of a very different race that must have stood in the days gone by on this spur now occupied by the chalet. Even the Counts Palatine, for near here are the fragmentary ruins of the old castle they built and inhabited. Amongst others, here in the twelfth century, lived Conrad of Hohenstaufen, brother of our old friend Frederick Barbarossa.

When the afternoon shadows were lengthening, and the heat and burden of the day was over, it was a delightful walk back through the zigzag ways of the wood. Light and shadows chequered our path, and between the trees one caught glimpses of blue sky. The birds were silent, for their singing time was over, but it was in these very woods, years ago, that we had listened with Herr Karl to the rapturous nightingales pouring out their ceaseless flood of song through the dark hours, making night beautiful with their melody. All had passed away. The little songsters had had their day ; Herr Karl had gone into the unseen, but still lived in many a heart. His widow, though long past the bloom of youth, had received offers from some of the highest in the land, even as before her marriage, but she was not to be won a second time. In her beautiful Austrian home she has devoted her life to her children, fulfilling her husband's wishes—his dying commands, as she has always considered them—and has had her reward. Her eldest son—another Baron Karl—is the counterpart of what his father was at his age, and promises to become distinguished in the Austrian political world. He is a great favourite with his Emperor. Nevertheless, he is much at home with his mother ; and she, foreseeing political troubles in store for Austria in the future, could almost wish that he had been contented with a quieter sphere of action. It may come to that when he too one day meets his fate.

All our time in Heidelberg was taken up with these dreams of the past. Every familiar street in the town, every turn in the woods, every outline and nook and cranny of the old Castle, suggested some bygone incident or conversation in which a host of friends took part. Of all of them Herr Karl was by far the most regretted ; but when, at the end of our zigzag walk we again stood upon the Castle Terrace, haunted by Elizabeth of Bohemia and the Trompeter von Säkkingen, it was impossible to believe that so many years had gone by since we had stood there together on that first eventful night, watching the rising of the moon, thrilled with the nightingales' song, and listening to good old Fritz recounting the history of his apparitions,

BROKEN IDEALS.

BY LADY MARGARET MAJENDIE.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER the marriage the young couple and their mother lived on for several months undisturbed in their modest home. The spring merged into summer and waned into the autumn of that terrible year, and though the sword of Damocles hung over them by a single hair, they continued unmolested.

Madame Merline and Diane together did the work of house and garden, and became expert both in kitchen and workroom. The humble neighbours amongst whom they lived grew quite accustomed to the sight of the popular député's young wife as she went about among them, doing her small marketing and devoting herself to any among them who were sick or in trouble.

Diane's eyes had recovered their brilliancy, her pretty mouth its smiles, and the mutinous curly hair escaped the severe bourgeoisie cap. Only in the larger and more populous streets did she find it necessary to wear the black hood which effectually concealed her features.

Hermon was out all day and often late into the night, and his face grew more dark and haggard daily; there was an expression of suffering in the delicate lines round his mouth which went to the hearts of the two women who loved him.

By a mutual understanding between them, they forbore from asking him questions; they only received with gratitude what he told them of his doings, and strove with might and main to have smiles and bright, contented looks with which to greet his return, while at the very sight of his face their hearts were aching. But when he was away they poured out their anxieties to each other, and during those long monotonous days the two women learned to love each other passionately.

All this time, without a day's intermission, Hermon Dol was working to obtain the release of Adrien, the dearest friend (as well as brother) he had in the world. He strained both influence and power to the utmost, and more than once succeeded in obtaining reprieve when the last moment seemed inevitable; but the authorities were getting weary of his importunity, and Hermon began to be conscious that his influence was on the wane. At last the crisis came.

The ladies had been busy all day, and when the evening closed in were glad to sit down in the cool wood-panelled parlour with windows open to the garden. It was very warm, and among the trees a thrush was singing fitfully in the gathering darkness.

Madame Merline, by the light of an oil lamp, was working busily mending stockings for her son, for in those days money was scarce, no rents came in from the de Courcel lands, and the money they had with them must of necessity be carefully husbanded.

Diane had been ironing aprons and kerchiefs and her husband's frilled shirts, and her arms ached sorely. As she put down the last piece of dainty cambric, she leaned back in her hard, wooden chair, with her arms crossed behind her head, and allowed herself to give way to a long sigh.

"My child, my little one," said Madame Merline, "have you done too much? Are you very weary?"

"It is late, sweet mother; put aside your work and rest. See, the light is bad, and you must not hurt your eyes."

Diane put the lamp on a distant table, and drawing forward a stool she sat down and nestled her fair head into her mother's lap. Madame Merline's tender hands softly soothed and caressed her.

"My poor little thing," she murmured.

"It is not my fatigue," said Diane, with a low sob. "It is not that, maman! but oh! it is so long, so wearily long to live and wait for news which never comes! What are they all doing in that strange far-off land? And oh! maman, Hermon has ceased assuring me that all must end well for Adrien."

Madame Merline paused for a moment, then she said gently: "Diane, it seems to me now as if the passage from this world to the next is so short and swift that half the dread is taken away. To-day here in pain, suspense, perhaps bitter sorrow, to-morrow one painless flash and the heavens are opened, and there in the radiant light our dear Lord waiting to welcome us home. Think of it, Diane—all tears wiped away. Rest won. If it be so with Adrien with his pure, young soul and blameless life. . . . Do not cry like that, my beloved child!"

"I know, maman, I know. I will not grudge him that great gain; but have you thought of all he loses? his young bright future? He was so happy! And poor Armande?"

"Let us rather think of himself, child. If we dwell on ourselves our courage may break down. I know, for I have seen it over and over again, that when the end is near, a radiance from the other shore shuts out the darkness of this, and Death in God's service is but passing into fuller Life."

"Adrien is so good, maman. No, I will cry no more. I will hope on, as Hermon always bids me hope. It is best to hope, is it not? At least it carries one through the time." Her voice broke.

Madame Merline softly kissed her. This reason for hope seemed unutterably sad to her.

Diane spoke again: "If I could only hear from England."

"Ah, but for that we must have patience. At least, darling, you

know that there they are safe and out of danger, and after a time Hermon will find a way of letting them know our address."

"Yes, I do try to be patient. Hermon knows best."

"Tell me, Diane, when did you first meet Hermon?"

"He used to come to St. François with Adrien in their holidays, but I was living at the Moutonnerie with my nurse Perrine, and I can only remember vaguely thinking that they were both my brothers. Eustache was my father's favourite and delicate; he always lived with them in Paris. When Hermon came back to save all our lives, he came as Hermon Dol, and I did not recognise him then."

"When did you see him?"

Diane began to brighten up at the recollection. "I came down to get help for Zi-zi, my little rough pony, and I ordered him to take the stone out of his hoof. How we used to order people about then! I thought he was a common farrier."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards I heard him speak to the people. I admired him more than anyone I ever saw in all my life; his words were so noble. He put into words the dreams of my life, and I would have died for such a leader. But later, when they were all gone, maman, and I thought how dangerous it would be for him to have to look after me, I tried to hide from him. I had loved our people and lived among them, and I thought I was one of them, but after that man André Meunier's death, they saw in me no friend, only one of the hated race."

She shuddered at the recollection.

"Yes, my beloved child, others have experienced the same, but I thank God from my heart that Hermon, after long searching, found you again."

Diane looked at her wistfully: "I gave him much extra anxiety," she said, "but there, you know, maman, I thought he was Hermon Dol, not one of us, sharing our danger."

"What made you first take part with the people, Diane?"

Diane shook her head. "Do not ask me, maman; I cannot define; there were so many things. The poverty and pain, the hard, ceaseless often useless toil, the fever-stricken people, the intolerable injustice of all rule, for were they not also men?" And her eyes flashed. "Then when Hermon came he brought into order all the revolt that was breaking my heart. And now those very men for whom he slaved, whom he has helped to freedom and justice, are tearing each other like tigers unchained."

"My Diane," said Madame Merline sorrowfully, "the worst result of injustice and tyranny is not suffering, but sin."

"I hope Hermon will soon come in," said Diane restlessly. "Surely it is later than usual?"

"He is sometimes much later than this, dear."

"Yes, but to-night I have forebodings. It is all so sad and

frightful, *maman*. To-day at Canot's fruit-shop the children were playing with a new toy, a model guillotine. They were cutting off dolls' heads, calling them aristocrats, and I saw old *Catin* come home."

"Ah, that woman is a horror!" cried Madame Merline, with a shudder.

"She came reeling in with a red cap stuck awry on her wild, flying hair. She had been to the 'Place de la Guillotine,' and had seen—had seen——"

"Do not think about it, *Diane*! Thank God in this quiet garden we can keep away."

"It was a young fellow with fair hair, *maman*, tall and with blue eyes, and old *Catin* laughed and shouted as she told the children how grave and still he looked, though white as death, and I—I thought it sounded like *Adrien*, and I dared not ask, when suddenly *Canot* called out that it could be no other than *de Trouville*, and the children said that *Marie Canot* had been his mother's maid."

"And it was then *Pierre de Trouville*? *Princesse Anne* is my dear friend. She is a widow, and *Pierre* her only child."

"She had not long to wait," faltered *Diane*. "She was the next to follow, and *Marie Canot* talked of the wonderful white hair she used to dress."

Madame Merline covered her face with her hands, murmuring, "How long, O Lord! how long?"

There was a long silence.

Presently *Diane* rose to her feet. "*Hermon* must soon come in. I will begin to heat the soup," she said. She struck a light. The two women instinctively avoided looking in each other's faces. They laid the cloth and put out bread and cold meat, and Madame Merline said anxiously: "I will put out another bottle of the good wine to-night, instead of that thin sour stuff. There are few left, but *Hermon* will come in tired, and perhaps our little store may last out until the times change."

"Or till perhaps *Hermon* can leave *Paris*?"

Madame Merline shook her head. "Ah, if only that might be," she said. "But our concern is for the moment only. *Diane*, you look white—will you not lie down and sleep? I will wake you when I hear the key put into the lock."

"Presently, *maman*. It is not really late."

Twelve o'clock struck, one, two, three—*Hermon* did not return.

The two women moved about, made little preparations, wandered restlessly through the rooms. Then as the hours rolled by they sat close together, saying nothing—*Diane* on the floor with her head on Madame Merline's lap. She lay there so still that her mother hoped and prayed that even for five minutes she had forgotten her terrors in sleep—but it was not so—for at the slightest sound, however far off, the smallest break in the ceaseless monotonous roar of the great city,

every nerve in her body would quiver, betraying that all were strained in an agony of apprehension.

And so the long hours of the night wore on, and faint wan light began to steal through the silent house.

Madame Merline rose and threw open the windows and let in the cool bracing chill of approaching day.

Diane shivered as she rose to her feet—she felt stiff and weak. At this moment the mother was the stronger. She set about the morning work, lit the stove and made hot coffee. She saw that Diane was exhausted.

A neighbouring clock struck four; a cock crowed loudly; the grey light slowly brightened through the dusky trees.

Diane's strained ears caught a slight sound. "Maman," she exclaimed, "there is someone at the door!"

It was a very faint cautious knock, and Diane flew out with the key. In her breathless hope she did not pause with her customary caution, but opened the door at once, and two dark figures slipped quietly in. The foremost, a short broad figure in a large peasant woman's cloak, threw it back and disclosed the features of Mariette Perrine. The other, a man in a slouched hat and long black hair, hung back patiently.

Diane started in surprise, and the next moment the two girls were locked in each other's arms.

Madame Merline came out, her face wan in the grey light. Mariette began to explain breathlessly.

"Mesdames," she said, "I have brought you news, but I have not a moment to spare. Monsieur Hermon came to me yesterday and told me that he had succeeded at last in obtaining the release of Monsieur Adrien d——"

Then Diane turned in an ecstasy, crying, "Mariette! oh, Mariette, is this Adrien?"

And the black-haired stranger pushed back hat and wig and showed her the worn young face and blue eyes of her own brother. She could not suppress sobs of joy as she clung to him, and he stood in his own grave way stroking her face and smiling down on her. Madame Merline gave him a mother's kiss and welcome.

Mariette would waste no time. "It is already four," she said. "Let us go in and lock the doors. I must get back before the world is astir."

Diane caught her hand. "Can you tell me where Hermon is?" she cried. But the girl shook her head.

"I do not know," she said. "Monsieur Hermon came to me yesterday and told me this—that he had strained all the influence he possessed to save your brother, that he had made a long speech about it in public which had for the moment raised strong sympathy, but that Monsieur Robespierre was very angry with him. Monsieur Hermon had that white look on his face which makes his eyes look

like steel knives when he spoke and told me that Robespierre dared not refuse him, but had given him a private order by which the prisoner was to be given up to him at two o'clock at night by a small private door at the back of the *conciergerie*. I was to meet him in the next street with a coach, and drive with him to the Rue Piccard, there to dismiss the coach and lead him by back streets to you. In the coach I had ready hat, cloak, and black wig. It was so dark when we got in that the driver could not see what manner of man it was."

"And my son?" said Madame Merline.

"Hermon was with me, Aunt Merline," said Adrien. "It was like this: I was roused from sleep by a warder, who simply told me that I had been sent for. It was an unusual hour, but we all knew the meaning of such a summons, and that it was best to say farewell. To my surprise I was hustled through back passages and vaults, which looked like kitchens, and handed over to Hermon, who stood waiting just within the door with an order from Robespierre himself in his hand. He gave me a rough greeting before the men, leaving them, I fully believe, under the impression that it was only a change of prison. The streets were dark; more than once we were hailed by the passing patrol, but they all knew Hermon, and at the top of the street Hermon showed me a coach standing, and told me that I should find Mariette within. When he left me he said that it would be safer not to accompany me himself, and that his work was not finished even then; we shook hands and he went."

Diane gave a long sigh; the same hope struck both her and her mother. It might be only a matter of precaution which had kept Hermon away.

"I must go," said Mariette, for the day was brightening, and sounds of life became audible in the wood-yard opposite.

"I suppose," she said anxiously, "that in case of domiciliary visits you can hide Monsieur Adrien? You see, no one should know that he is here. Robespierre is very angry, and if Monsieur Hermon were found harbouring a refugee it would be the pretext he wants, in spite of his own order."

"Yes, Mariette, thank you indeed. We will see to that," said Madame Merline.

The girls went to the gate, where they kissed each other with full hearts.

"Dear Mariette, my sister," whispered Diane. "We can never thank you."

Mariette brushed away her tears as she went bravely out.

CHAPTER XVI.

FORTUNATE it proved for the security of the little house in the Rue Antellis that there was no possible ingress except through the garden door, which was always kept bolted, locked, and chained, but though this made a surprise impossible, it had this disadvantage, that there was no back door through which a rapid flight might be made, and Madame Merline had to consider the best means of hiding Adrien, should Robespierre repent of his clemency and order his arrest again. They would probably search the house of the man who had worked so hard to save him, first of all.

Before anything they conducted him upstairs and supplied him with the greatest luxury a man just released from that long and close imprisonment could know, fresh linen and clothes of Hermon Dol's, and a bath of abundant warm water. The cleanliness was delicious to the poor fellow, and the fresh air which blew flower-scented through the open window.

Meanwhile the ladies examined every hole and corner of the house, to see that all was secure. The house was square, built round a small centre-vestibule from which the two parlours with wooden panels opened, and on either side were two of the narrow little rooms known as powdering closets, where ladies and gentlemen were wont to sit patiently while the elaborate powdered *coiffures* of the date were piled up.

Hermon Dol had bought the house as it stood with meagre, conventional furniture, seeing in it a peaceful and safe refuge for his mother while both were obliged to remain in Paris. There were neither curtains nor hangings, the bareness of the panelled rooms offered not the slightest help to concealment.

At the back of the offices a door led into a small stable into which Diane penetrated. It was dark but dry, and there were stalls for two horses, but no coach-house. In one of the stalls was a store of hay, from the midst of which the house cat sprang out spitting with rage at having her retreat invaded.

"This is our only chance, maman," said Diane. "If they search for Adrien we can perhaps hide him in the hay."

But Madame Merline shook her head. "They would turn over the hay," she said. "I can do better than that."

They went on through the stables. There was a wood-house here packed closely with cut wood and faggots. The faggots were piled up against the outer wall into the road. Madame Merline showed Diane that behind them there was a loose plank which covered a recess in the wall.

"We concealed Father Martin, the priest who married you, Diane, here more than once," she said. "The plank covers the recess, which is narrow, but deep enough not to be too stifling; it looks natural, and I think safe. When Adrien has finished his toilette we

will show him how at the slightest warning he can slip through the stables into this little hole. Meanwhile, please God, nobody may suspect that anyone is here at all."

"I should think he might walk in the garden at night, maman?"

"Yes, I hope so, but we cannot be too careful."

"And Hermon will certainly come home to-day, maman?"

"Yes, yes, my child, Hermon will come home to-day."

But two or three days of anxious watching passed and Hermon never came. They were endless days with long sleepless nights, and every morning when they met, Diane and Madame Merline would tell each other that it was all right, only prudence that kept Hermon away; he would soon come now.

One night they were sitting all three together in the panelled parlour, when Madame Merline found courage to question Adrien about his life in prison.

"I hardly dare to mention names," she said; "for so few of my old friends have left the country. Did many leave the prison while you were there?"

"They went every day. The list was read aloud by the head warder, and each one hearing his name rose up, embraced those nearest to him and went."

"And you heard no more?"

"Nay, it was best to hear no more."

"Did all go bravely, Adrien?"

"With very few exceptions. I saw Désirée de Latau break down when her name was left out, and her two sisters Jeanne and Blanche were called together. Blanche was only sixteen, just from the Convent."

"And Désirée?"

"God help her, I do not know! Her *fiancé* was called the day before. He made no farewell, he only kissed her and murmured, 'A bientôt, ma Désirée.' Poor Anatole! Désirée was still there when I came away; she sat in the far corner on the ground with her hands clasped round her knees, and her eyes always fixed on the door waiting—waiting!"

He paused a moment, then brushed his handkerchief across his brow, and spoke again.

"Did you know the Abbé de Lasselles, Aunt Merline?"

"Yes—well."

"He was with us. He used to say his Hours regularly in a low low voice, and we used to join him. I have seen the gayest throw down cards and dice to do so. You must not imagine that it was all despondency—not so; many were gay enough! The old Marquise de Carondel was more witty than ever, and the Abbé Goulard capped every 'mot' with one more brilliant. You would hear the prison walls ring with laughter then."

Diane shivered.

"And the Abbé Lasselles?"

"Ah, we missed him when he went. We all assembled round him, and he blessed us for the last time, the gentle, noble old man. Even Madame de Carondel, who has always scoffed at religion, knelt to kiss his hand. I saw her face as they led him out—it was that of one in despair, and yet the next morning when her turn came she departed with a deep curtesy to all of us. 'No farewells, my friends,' she said, 'it is not worth while'; but there was something ghastly in the exquisite smile on her face. The Abbé Goulard sobbed like a child; he never said a witty thing after that but took to his Hours. He was there when I came away."

"Maman!" cried Diane suddenly. "Hark! there are people at the gate!"

Madame Merline turned to Adrien.

"Go at once!" she exclaimed. "Do not waste a second! Diane, stay here! See! take this needlework. I will go to the gate."

Both obeyed without a word. The knocking at the door that had startled them was repeated, and Madame Merline went slowly to the door.

"Who is there?" she asked in a clear voice.

"Open in the name of the Republic!"

Slowly and with some fumbling Madame Merline unfastened the locks, and in a moment four men stepped in. She started back in well-feigned surprise.

"Citizen Hermon Dol is not at home," she said. "What can I do for you?"

"Stand aside, citoyenne," said the leader of the little party, Hermon's former acquaintance Laudret. "We act under orders from headquarters. We must search the house!"

"You exceed your rights, citizens," said Madame Merline, drawing back with grave dignity. "My son is absent, engaged in his duties to the Nation. The house of a member of the Convention is sacred."

"Stand aside, citoyenne," said Laudret angrily. "There is nothing sacred before this!"—and he flourished a paper in his hand on which she could see the signature of Robespierre himself.

Madame Merline led the way indoors. In the vestibule she stopped, pointed to the staircase, and said haughtily, "Search as you will, citizens. My son's wife and I will await you here," and she opened the door of the parlour and went in.

Laudret followed, carrying his lantern. His keen eyes wandered round the walls and scanty furniture, and rested on the little, spindle-legged work-table, by the side of which Hermon Dol's young wife bent over plain domestic needlework.

"I must leave a man here," he said sharply. "A rumour has reached us that you are harbouring a proscribed *ci-devant*."

"You are welcome to search," said Diane calmly. "You can do so with safety. We are only women here."

Laudret called in one of his men.

"Stay here, Jean," he said fiercely, "and do not permit these women to move. If this girl is concealing an aristocrat in the place, she shall have no chance of warning him!"

He left the room, and they heard the three men stamping heavily upstairs.

Madame Merline turned to the one left in the room, and courteously offered him a chair. He was a worn-looking man with a grey complexion and trembling hands. He sat down heavily, removing his hat and wiping his damp forehead.

"You look ill, citizen," said Diane suddenly. "What is the matter?"

"It is nothing," said the man, "but the constant bloody work has got on my nerves! It kills me, but I cannot keep away! I go in spite of myself day after day to count the heads that fall!"

"I think I know your face, my friend," said Madame Merline quietly. "Were you not Prince de Trouville's major-domo?"

The man cowered, and cried shrilly, "I will not be questioned, citoyenne!"

"Nay, I will not question you. Doubtless you were there on Wednesday last when——"

The man gasped. "My heart is weak, but I cannot keep away!"

Madame Merline was white as a sheet; she saw Diane's face of shrinking horror, but she conquered herself, went quietly to the little cupboard in the corner and brought out a small flask of brandy.

"Drink," she said gently, "and listen to me."

The glass the man raised to his lips clattered against his teeth, but he succeeded in pouring the spirit down his throat.

"That is well," he muttered. "It warms and steadies me"—and he filled it up again.

"Yes," said Madame Merline; "but I will tell you a better cure than that! When you denounced your young master and his mother and—and those others, you did not realise that you were murdering them, eh?"

The man sprang up with an oath.

"Well," she went on steadily, "for every life you sacrificed, save another life, and when you have expiated your sins, it will be time to think of pardon!"

The man sat down again suddenly. "*Peste*, it is not a bad idea!" he said gruffly.

Madame Merline said no more. She turned to place herself between Diane and their companion, for she dreaded lest he should see the expression she could not conceal of horror and loathing on her daughter-in-law's face.

The man did not speak again, but sat in a dull silence, his head hanging on his breast. From time to time he sipped the brandy before him.

After a time which seemed interminable Laudret and his men came back. They had searched the whole place inside and out thoroughly and had found nothing.

Laudret insisted upon shaking hands with the ladies, swearing that all he had done was in the interest of his dear friend Hermon Dol.

Madame Merline went with them to the gate. As they passed out the man in whose charge they had been left put a heavy hand suddenly on her shoulder, and said low, "It was not a bad idea, citoyenne! Not a bad idea!"

She exercised the strongest self-control, and did not throw off the hand in disgust. She locked and chained the door carefully behind them and went back.

The two women, summoning up the strong patience in which they were learning to live, went to release Adrien from the narrow, cobweb-hung recess in the wood-house.

The carefully stacked wood had been searched and overturned, the fagots thrown over. Truly, they had searched thoroughly, but by God's mercy had failed!

CHAPTER XVII.

It was a dark damp night in the winter of the year 1793, and through the streets of London swept a cold and pitiless east wind. Renée drew her thin cloak and hood more closely about her as she hurried homewards. The thick, grimy mud clung to her high-heeled shoes. Her sweet face had grown very white and thin, and her grey eyes larger than ever now. She walked fast, looking neither to right nor left as she went. At the door of the house in which the little party of French exiles had found refuge a private coach was standing, and Renée, coming round the corner, battling against the wind, quickened her pace at the sight of it. A lady coming out of the house and about to enter the carriage caught sight of her, and ran to meet her, crying out—

"Renée! Renée! dear child, I was so sorry not to find you at home; I wanted particularly to see you! Oh, but you look cold and pinched, my poor dear!"

"Emilie de Marcelin!" exclaimed Renée, kissing her warmly; "you are well, happy? They are kind to you?"

"My employers are angels!" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Marcelin eagerly. "My pupils delight me, and I teach far better than you would believe possible! I must not stop, Renée, dearest; I have to rejoin Lady Johnstone in ten minutes. I have left messages for you with Marie. *Au revoir, dear!*"

The good kindly lady stepped into the coach and was driven away, while Renée wearily mounted the steps and entered her home.

The days were short then, and by five o'clock the house was full of gloom, an atmosphere as if the fog outside had penetrated and could not be driven out. Renée met Jules on the stairs; he was coming down with an empty decanter of eau-sucrée in his hand.

"How is the rheumatism, Jules?" she said kindly, as he pressed back against the wall to let her pass. The man smiled ruefully.

"I could bear it without a word," he said, "if it did not so impede my activity. It is hard for 'ces dames' to see their only servant halting round the table like a polichinelle with one string tighter than the other."

"I have brought you the embrocation, Jules."

"Oh, mademoiselle, and we have so little money!"

"You are of more value to us than any money, my friend."

Jules took the bottle she held out to him with a bow so profound that she did not see that his eyes filled with tears at her words. She went on into the little salon she shared with her sister and brother-in-law and Armande de Cavanaugh.

Madame de Lagrange was sitting by the table mending some torn garment. Armande sat by her, busy with her embroidery.

Renée summoned all the gaiety she could command into her face and voice as she took off and laid aside her cloak and changed her outdoor shoes for slippers.

"You are quite nice and warm here, Marie," she exclaimed; "you have overcome this terrible English cold."

"Yes—yes; see the reason! Jules brought in these beautiful earthenware bowls of hot ashes. We have been sitting with one each between our feet. It is delicious!"

"Jules is a treasure!" cried Armande. "And tell us quickly, Renée, have you sold the embroidered muslin?"

"Yes," cried Renée; "sold it for twelve pounds. Thank God indeed! I have paid the butcher and the baker, and I have bought hartshorn and oil for Jules' rheumatic knee, and I have plenty left to go on with."

"Ah, that is good news!" said Armande wistfully. "Renée, the shop will give me twelve shillings for those curtain bands, but it is very little. I wish I could work like you."

"My sweet, every little helps; and please remember how long we have been living on your pearls. Alas, you will never see them again!"

"Emilie de Marcelin has been here," said Marie suddenly. "She says she is as happy as a queen, and that her employers are charming—*bourgeois* to the last degree, but so amiable. If one believes all that she says her life must be in paradise."

"And for witness to her truth behold her cheeks," cried Armande. "They were thinner than any of ours, even than yours, Madame, and now they are round again."

The door opened slowly and Monsieur de Lagrange came in. The courtly French gentleman was greatly changed. His face had grown worn and deeply lined, the brows constantly bent in a distressed frown. His sunken blue eyes lighted up a little as they rested on the two girls.

"What is it, children?" he said. "One would imagine from your looks that you had heard good news."

Renée held up her purse and shook it. "See, seven golden sovereigns, my brother," she cried. "We shall have a *ragoût* to-night of the very best."

Monsieur de Lagrange sat down and sighed heavily. "I am the only man left among you," he said sorrowfully. "Since De Cavanaugh and young Laval and his brother went off to the frontier war I am the only man, and I can do nothing to help you."

Madame de Lagrange looked up eagerly. "Henri," she said, "the girls work so hard, night and day. Would it make you happier to earn money yourself, less sad and anxious, *mon ami*?"

"Happier! What do you take me for, Marie? Do you think I can see these children work for me without breaking my heart?"

"Then Henri—— But let me explain. Emilie de Marcelin has been here to-day."

"Ah! Is she content in her new life? We missed her bright spirits when she left us."

"Content! Nay, happy. She loves the Johnstones and the children, fairy daughters of eleven and eight, who cling about her lovingly. She was telling me that Lady Johnstone has been seeking among our exiled compatriots for someone who would teach her little daughters and some others of their friends how to dance as we only in our France can dance."

"Do you know of anyone, Renée?" said Monsieur de Lagrange indifferently.

Renée did not answer; she had gathered up some of Marie's work and was mending a torn *jabot*.

"I wish I could do it, Henri," said Marie plaintively; "but in this cold weather I have no strength."

"My dearest Marie, you must not dream of it," cried Renée earnestly. "You are our own queen, and we will all work for you."

"Could Génie do it?" said Armande. "We could perhaps take care of the little ones during her hour of absence, and she needs money sorely. You know, Renée, she went again to apply for that money her husband had destined for her use, and the answer was that no money had been deposited for her, and the Paris house of business was closed. The artificial flowers that she makes are very beautiful, but it makes her so unhappy that she cannot earn more to put into our common property. She thinks she does not pay her share."

"Génie could not do it," said Marie, "for she dances very badly."

She has no grace, she is tall and stiff, and, since she heard that the St. Hilaire had both—both been executed, she has wept away all her beauty—she has grown so thin."

"That is not wonderful," said Renée gently; "she gives all that is nourishing to the little ones and lives on bread only, I verily believe."

Monsieur de Lagrange had been sitting with his head bowed on his breast. He looked up now with a strange look of determination on his stern face.

"I myself will do it," he said, and a grim smile curled his lips. "I was accounted one of the best dancers of my day."

"That is well," said Renée. "God bless you, Henri, my brother!"

His wife looked up at him and strove to speak, but the words would not come, she was struggling with quick-rising tears.

Armande broke the silence. "Let us push aside the table after supper and practice. I will be your partner, dear Marquis. I wish we had a harpsichord."

Jules came in to announce their frugal six o'clock meal.

Armande stretched out her pretty hands and arms. "They are stiff with working," she said. "It will unstiffen me to go once more through the old steps. The last time I danced a minuet was at the Tuilleries with Adrien." Her voice broke into a sob, and she ran quickly downstairs.

Renée put a covering over all the work on the table. "This London is very dirty," she said, dusting the tips of her white fingers. "Henri, thanks to you we shall be able to force Génie to dine better; it is false economy to starve. Marie, will you come downstairs?"

Marie shook her head. "Bring me a cup of coffee," she said, "and a *tartine* if there is any butter."

"Darling, we have a *ragoût* to-night. Will you try one little morsel? Do you feel less well to-day?"

"It is hardly that, my Renée, it is only that I can do no more and bear no more, and the good God knows it and is going to let me go, and He knows also, my Renée, that that will be the best economy of all." Still the same strange arch merriment.

Renée went downstairs with a bursting heart. She dared not give way, she dared not refuse the food, although she felt as if each mouthful would choke her; she must keep up her strength with all her power.

Génie de St. Hilaire was there with her two little ones. All her bright vivacity was gone. She was a gaunt worn woman, still looking pathetically young, for the large eyes had a childlike wistful look. Her one black gown was worn almost threadbare, and the black net kerchief crossed upon her breast and in soft folds round her slender throat gave no relief to her mourning garb.

"Renée," she said eagerly, "I shall be able to work late to-night, this dinner is so good. See how well the children look, though we cannot say the same for ourselves. Perhaps a cold raw climate is good for children. To-night I shall finish a wreath of violets worth two pounds. Emilie ordered it for a friend of Lady Johnstone's."

In spite of their kindly invitation Jules would never sit down with his masters in exile. He would wait on them punctiliously and dine himself afterwards by the little charcoal stove he used in the kitchen. This night Génie went down with him to the kitchen to help him to wash up, for his knees were bad, and she wished to see that he ate his portion of *ragoût* and did not save it for the next day, as the faithful fellow had been known to do.

Armande put the children to bed, and presently the dull old house rang with their little voices as she played and romped with them.

Outside in the street one passer-by said to another: "Do you hear the French refugees? They have no hearts, these shallow foreigners. All Paris is a slaughter-house, and the tigers are beginning to fight each other over the dying and the dead."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE scene of the first dancing lesson was never effaced from Armande's memory in after years.

The women found this little trial more difficult to bear than they had anticipated. Their own great seigneur—he who had always been paramount, a sovereign reigning with an authority without appeal, born and bred in absolute luxury! Strenuous necessity had turned the two girls from charming society belles into brave unselfish characters; a thousand qualities brought into play the very existence of which had lain unsuspected—unselfishness, clever management, forethought, patience, self-discipline—and the brilliant French gaiety became of untold value as the sunshine glorifies even that which is dark and sordid. In Génie de St. Hilaire the same hard discipline had developed the dormant motherhood; the dependence of the little ones on herself instead of on their nurses brought it home to her, and though her heart was too sore and hungry for gaiety, she learned self-control that the children might not see her tears.

But it had to be faced. All the morning they tried their utmost to smarten up Henri de Lagrange that he might make a dignified appearance. He possessed still one velvet suit which he had never worn in England, and which had about it all the grace and *chic* of the *ancien régime*. The muslin *jabot* had been washed and ironed by the girls over and over again, but though sadly worn and mended it was white as snow. Jules was a skilful coiffeur, and with his own hair clubbed and powdered Monsieur le Marquis looked very well. But nothing could take the distressed look from his thin line of

eye-brow, not even the society smile with which he entered the gorgeous drawing-room of the wealthy Johnstones', accompanied by Armande, who had undertaken to play the harpsichord for him. She wore a looped-up *saque* of dark-blue brocade over a dark skirt of the same colour—it had belonged to poor Génie—and was relieved by a large white *fichu* and the one pair of long black mittens they possessed among them.

And behold! they were met with a delicacy and tender consideration worthy of the most gentle blood. Lady Johnstone herself, rubicund and over-dressed, swept a curtsy to the *émigré* as if at Court. Sir Joseph, her worthy husband, shook his thin white fingers with a fist of iron, and the children were brought forward to curtsy and salute him. In five minutes they were clinging about Armande, kissing her lovingly, and carrying her in delight to the harpsichord.

The children were desired to watch carefully while Lady Johnstone and Monsieur de Lagrange swam through a minuet together. Armande struck the thin tinkling notes in sharp stiff time, as they swept past each other, stamped, rose on tiptoe, sank in profound bow and deepest curtsy, rose again with the same sharp touch of high-heeled shoe, whirling gracefully, moving with arched arms and touching finger-tips, again sinking and rising, all in crisp rhythmic movement—the very poetry of motion.

Henri de Lagrange moved through it all as if in a dream. All the sordid realities of his present life—the cold, penury, aching anxiety, ceaseless regret—seemed to vanish away. Once again he was in his native world—in warm perfumed salons with rosy silken walls, and glittering mirrors reflecting back the grace of his own elaborate steps. The tinkling harpsichord became the thundering military music of the Tuilleries. He seemed to breathe and expand, once more to tread the earth as one of the favoured *élite*, to whom warmth, luxury, pre-eminence, were a rightful heritage. One more deep courtly reverence; one or two sharp spirited chords. Then it was over. The dream vanished. Monsieur de Lagrange was no longer the brilliant Seigneur. He was a broken exile. Heaven help him—a dancing-master.

That night the stars came out. The damp atmosphere gave way to a fine dry cold which pierced the exiles to the bone. Fires in all the rooms became a necessity of life, but though they heated the dingy house as much as they dared, nothing seemed to warm Madame de Lagrange. She shivered from morning till night. She was born in the warm south, a native of sunny Provence. At last she remained in bed, and there they were able to keep her warmer. Lady Johnstone could not understand it. To her, the bracing winter weather was invigorating beyond measure, and she could not believe that the nipping atmosphere which caused her blood to tingle with life and health was withering the very existence of the always fragile Frenchwoman.

With a rough delicacy they knew how to appreciate she forced upon her acceptance a long blue cloak lined with warm furs, and for this gift the gratitude of the whole party was unbounded, for sitting up in bed, enveloped in its ample folds, Marie de Lagrange found comfort and warmth at last.

But as the winter advanced she grew weaker. The three younger women worked all day, sometimes even far into the night. Génie's artificial flowers became known and gained a readier sale. Armande gave up the embroidery in which her skill was limited, and devoted herself to making little graceful trifles such as French people love—bags and needle-books and sachets, all done with that taste and originality which gives a grace to common things; for these she found a good sale. Renée had orders for her exquisite work, and though it brought much larger sums they came at longer intervals, and before them like a cloud loomed the next instalment of rent.

In January the Johnstones and their family left London. Before going Sir Joseph asked Monsieur de Lagrange point-blank whether he needed money. But something of pity or patronage in his manner raised up the indomitable pride of the *émigré*, and with an exquisite bow he assured the Englishman that they wanted nothing, and that they expected remittances from home. So the good Johnstones went on their way unwitting what that pitiful pride concealed.

It would be difficult to conjecture what would have become of the little party in Church Street, Soho, without Jules that bitter winter. Lame as he was from his painful rheumatic knee, he was never laid up, but continued to do all the cooking and heavy work of the house besides a hundred other odd services. He did marvels in the way of dainty dishes with scanty materials, and was never weary of trying to tempt the invalid's feeble appetite; but, do what they would, it was very hard to live, and the time came at last, one bitter December night, when Renée's long-tried courage and self-reliance broke down.

Marie had caught cold even in her warm bedroom, her breathing was short and oppressed, already she detected in it the rattle of approaching bronchitis.

Close in the neighbourhood in lodgings lived a refugee French priest—the very Père Martin who had married Hermon and Diane. This good man had some knowledge of medicine. He supported himself by teaching French and Latin.

Renée put on her hood and went to his lodgings through the mud and darkness of a black winter night to ask his advice for her sister.

Père Martin had just come in, and wearily put down his satchel of school-books. He did not delay a moment, but accompanied Renée home.

Jules opened the door to them, casting a look of reproach at Renée because she had not sent him. She often took his errands on

her, for he had as much work as he could do on his hands, but he never ceased to lament it.

Père Martin looked very grave when he came out of Marie's room with Renée. He followed her into the parlour and said :

"Dear Mademoiselle, this illness is far beyond our skill. Madame la Marquise has bronchitis ; it will be worse to-morrow, for the fever rises, and she is very feeble."

"Yes," said Renée in a low tone of despair. "We must have a physician. Will it cost much?"

The thin French priest shivered. "There is a very rich one," he said. "The famous Dr. Barlow. Perhaps he might understand that these are bad times."

"I will go for him, father," said Renée in a dull voice. "We must spare nothing if there be any hope of saving Marie."

"Nay, you must not ; I will go. What is an extra walk to a man ? I go at once."

Renée's face expressed her gratitude, and the good priest went out into the cold, controlling the chattering of his teeth till he was well outside. He was more fortunate than many, for his landlady was an Irishwoman, and she provided him on his return with a little boiling negus and a warming-pan placed in his bed.

Next morning Marie de Lagrange was worse, her breathing painful and difficult, her brain wandering. The doctor came twice that day, and, according to the practice of the date, bled her extensively.

In the evening Renée put aside all the proud shyness which had hitherto held her back, and, sitting down, she wrote to Sir Harry Locke. It was a simple little letter. She told him that they had almost no money left, that if he would come to their assistance now and lend them some, when this time of trouble was over he should be repaid, and—— Here she made a fresh beginning : possibly the trouble would never be over. God's hand lay heavily upon them, and she ended with a simple signature.

Renée confided the letter to Père Martin ; he was giving lessons to a Member of Parliament, and could ask him to frank it for her.

After a few days of raging fever and breathlessness the hard bronchial tightness gave way, and Marie lay very still and exhausted.

Her husband never left her ; he sat hour after hour by her side holding her little thin burning hand, watching her with a rigid stony face. In this bitter year of exile his wife had become unspeakably precious to him. It was as if he had never really known her in the old prosperous days when they had lived a life of never-ending society, seeing little of each other individually, and nothing of their children, who had been sent out to nurse during their first years, and afterwards educated apart from home life. Eustache alone had been much in Paris, but living in distant rooms with his tutor, and rarely seeing his parents.

And now the end was coming. During this time of exile, of suffering and privation, the old peevish complaining, self-indulgence, absorption in self, all had given way to a touching patience and uncomplaining submission.

Père Martin stole into the sick-room softly—he was wont to do so often—to repeat prayers, to comfort the sufferer with words of faith and hope. He knelt down after one glance at the still face, and the prayers he used were those for the dying.

When he ceased Marie opened her eyes suddenly, and, fixing them on her husband, said: "Henri, tell me, why have we never heard from Hermon Dol?"

"My dearest, all communication between friends in Paris and the *émigrés* is impossible, the danger for them is too great. God knows when we shall hear again."

"I saw Monsieur Hermon Dol just before my own escape, dear madame," said Père Martin gently. "It was indeed through his aid that I managed to secure my safety. God bless him!"

A light came into Marie's eyes. "Ah, tell me," she said in her toneless whisper—"tell me!"

"He was living in the Rue Antellis with his mother. It is in the suburbs—a quiet place. He was still a member of the Convention, always fighting for right and mercy. His position would have been untenable but for his popularity with the people."

Marie turned her white face to her husband, gasping, "Ask him—Diane."

"My friend," said Henri hoarsely, "do you know anything of a young girl under his charge—my youngest daughter Diane?"

"I do not know. Can it be the same? One night in the little chapel of the cemetery I gave the blessing of the Church to his marriage with a lady named Marie Diane."

"Ah, thank God; that is well!" murmured the mother. "Hermon, God will reward you! My little one is safe!"

She fell back in a dead faint. In terror they called Renée, and after a long interval they succeeded in bringing her back to consciousness; but the weakness seemed to gain on her, and that night the little sorrowing band of *émigrés* came together to join in prayer at her last Communion.

The following day she seemed better. There was an indescribable look of relief in her face as if a weight had been lifted away. To none had she ever confessed with what secret anguish she had pined for news of her youngest born. The cold-hearted fashionable lady, indifferent to her absent children, had in her own adversity learned the heart-hunger of the true mother, and now at last the news had come; her little Diane was safe, and Hermon had more than fulfilled his trust.

In the evening Marie asked Génie to bring her little ones to see her. The young mother stood by the bed, one little child clinging

closely to the black gown, in which he strove to hide his face, the other clasped half asleep upon her breast.

"Ah, my Génie," she murmured, "my little ones were never to me what these are to you! A great change has come on all our world, and through sorrow and death and woe God's reform will be worked out. Keep them close to your breast, my Génie. Oh, my children—my children!"

Génie took away the little ones hastily. That pitiful cry, "My children—my children!" went to her heart.

The wandering came back. To Marie it seemed as though she were always working her way through the thick woods of St. François seeking her lost children. Seeking—seeking, calling first on one, then another. Once poor Henri could bear it no longer; he bent his stern head down on the pillow by hers with a groan. "Marie, my Marie, have you not me?"

All night they watched. The cold was intense, even the constantly renewed fire could not keep out the chill. They gathered the warm dark furs all round her, so that in their midst the white face looked like ivory.

At last, when the blue light of dawn was beginning to pierce the night, when life is at its lowest ebb, and it is coldest, there came a loud ringing cry from the bed.

"Eustache—Eustache, found!"

Had he come for her, the one child who had gone before? Had God in His infinite mercy sent him to meet his mother on the threshold of the unknown land?

With tender force they had to unclothe the close-locked hands of husband and wife, for Henri de Lagrange had fallen in a dead faint by his wife.

(To be concluded.)



TWO OUTLOOKS: A DIALOGUE.

"WHAT dost thou here, sweet Sister? Thou art a flower too fair
To dwell within these convent walls, in this chill cloistral air!
Did youthful sorrow grieve thee? Did early clouds obscure?
Did lover's vow deceive thee? Can life no more allure?"

"No lover's vow deceived me, for He whom I adore,
Behold, His promises endure for ever, evermore.
No youthful grief did blight me, for friends and fortune smiled,
And life did well delight me—a wealthy noble's child.

"And many voices wooed me, but never one so sweet
As His whose tender thrilling tones have drawn me to His feet;
And many paths around me lay bright with golden sheen,
And Pleasure would have crowned me in meads of flowery green."

"Oh, strange it seems, sweet Sister, that thou could'st freely choose
These dim and silent cloistered ways, and happier paths refuse!
With some divine Anchises thy radiant youth should wed,
Mid Love's most sweet devices thy footsteps should be led!

"Thy lips were made for laughter—they are so rich in bloom!
Thy face, so like a fair wild rose, was meant for aught but gloom!
And soft with pent emotions, and clear as southern skies,
And deep as halcyon oceans, are thy down-drooping eyes!"

"Diviner than Anchises, or any god antique,
Or any grand but mythic form of Roman or of Greek,
And formed in fairer fashion, is He, my guiding star,
Whose Heart of deep compassion did seek me from afar!"

"Oh, sad it seems, sweet Sister, that thou in very truth
Canst deem that He who made thee fair, would banish from thy youth
All joy in mortal treasure, all gladness in the light,
All thrill of earth-born pleasure in the world He made so bright!

"The rose and pearl of sunrise in the cool and misty morn,
The flush of slumbrous poppies in the glint of amber corn;
The sound of waters flowing, the whispers of the trees,
The tints of opal glowing on the ever-changing seas;

"The subtle scent of cowslips in moonlight meadows calm,
The roses steeped in sunny light or bathed in dewy balm;
The poet's glowing vision, the artist's magic skill—
For these hast thou derision? to these must thou be chill?

"The haze-empurpled mountains, the verdant hills and dales,
The glorious majesty of night when every star unveils;
The ocean's diapason, the murmur of the rill—
Are these not sights to gaze on? are these not sounds to thrill?

"When we sleep in Nature's bosom, we shall not see her face,
Nor know her unveiled loveliness, her strange exceeding grace;
The eyes of them that love us will then no tales unfold,
Nor the wind-swept hills above us bring hints of æons rolled!

"Arise, thou fair ascetic ! What boots it thus to dwell ?
Oh, hark the choral harmonies that through the Cosmos swell !
How rhythmic, how victorious, is the rolling of the spheres !
How mystic, boundless, glorious, is the temple Nature rears !"

"I know the world hath grandeur, that nature is sublime,
And wonderful or beautiful in every mortal clime !
I know the way is dreary that I elect to tread,
And oft my feet are weary, and my foes awaken dread.

"But when the Bridegroom cometh, the Bridegroom of my choice,
When in the midnight hour I hear the music of His voice,
How sweet will be my guerdon ! For He will lay adown
The cross that was my burden, and change it for a crown !

"I seek another country, a more abiding sphere,
A city fashioned not with hands ; and in my dreams I hear—
Not earthly voices calling, that downward still would woo,
Not siren music falling, that would my soul undo—

But far and floating melodies of most celestial birth,
And voices of the living streams in pastures not of earth !
I see the peerless palaces that ne'er can know decay,
The flowers like dewy chalices that ne'er can fade away.

"I see the silvery fountains, the amaranthine bowers,
The flash of crystal battlements, the glow of jasper towers ;
And where the angels cluster, I see a face Divine,
Whose eyes of starry lustre, perchance may smile to mine !

"For that fair shore supernal, for that high bliss supreme,
Shall not my soul renounce the joys of life's unrestful dream ?
Like mists of morn for fleetness, like dews upon the grass,
So, with its cloying sweetness, our earthborn bliss doth pass !

"Go, think of empires fallen, of kingdoms vanished quite,
Of sad and desolated plains where phantoms haunt the night,
Of potentates long humbled, and lying in the dust,
Of cities that have crumbled, as all our cities must !

Go, mark the mournful ruins that strew a world like this,
A world fore-doomed to fade and fall, engulfed in time's abyss !
How doth the thought bewilder—all, all, must go at last,
The building as the builder, the present as the past !"

"Adieu to thee, sweet Sister ! Though far our paths divide,
We journey to the self-same bourne, and there doth peace abide,
I know the world is fleeting, that only death is sure,
But while my heart is beating, and while my days endure,

I still must cling to Nature, must watch her smiles and tears,
Must share in human joys and griefs, in human hopes and fears ;
So soon the shadows darken, so soon the hour is tolled,
When our ears no more can hearken, our eyes no more behold !"

ALICE MACKAY.



A GAME OF COTTABOS.

BY J. F. ROWBOTHAM, M.A.

I.

AT the house of Nicephorus of Athens, a Greek merchant of wealth and consideration, whose contributions to the expenses of the fleet had won him universal esteem from his townsmen, the game of cottabos had just begun, and a large company of Athenian gentlemen were there to indulge in the play. The ladies of Nicephorus' family were likewise present at the far end of the room, removed from the scrutiny of the guests, and many of them wearing veils in imitation of the Persian style, which, despite the hostility between Greeks and Persians, was much in vogue. Bright eyes glanced from a distance on the actions of the players, and in one case at least there were certain signals, invisible to the majority of those present, which passed between certain players and some of the fair spectators in the far corner of the room.

A chalk line was drawn along the floor, and at a length of ten to fifteen yards away was an alabaster basin of pure water, wherein a silver dish was floating, hollow, round, and slender. The young men who took part in the game toed the line in a row, holding cups of wine in their hands, with the evident intention of throwing the wine at the vessel in the water. The object of the game, it appeared, was to discharge the wine in such a manner that the stream of the red liquid should sink the vessel which floated in the basin. The game was accompanied by an omen. Whoever was so fortunate as to sink the vessel in the water would be equally fortunate, according to strict Greek augury, in the course of love. The girl whose name he had repeated when he made the throw would be sure to return his affections, and he was permitted the somewhat considerable breach of etiquette of claiming a kiss from her on the spot if she happened to be present, even though until that moment she were a perfect stranger to him.

So very particular a reward seemed to excite to high emulation the young men who took part in the game. As they stood in the line they were called upon one after the other to throw, and as each threw he pronounced the name of his lady-love, in complete assurance that the augury he was about to attempt would come true.

"Philaethes!"

"The divine beauty of Andromeda!" exclaimed the young man, whirling his arm with a scientific flourish, and in an instant dashing the whole contents of the cup towards the metal basin.

"Lost!" was the general exclamation of the company.

The wine, instead of falling in the silver vessel, dispersed in a sheet on the water, and the glittering goal in the centre was unwetted by a single drop.

"Chabrias!"

"May Myrinna be mine for ever!" was the answer of Chabrias, whose wine, delivered with better aim than the preceding cast, fell partially in the basin, but just missed sinking it.

"Agathon!"

"I play," replied that youth, stepping out from the rest, "for the fair face of Mylitta."

"This is somewhat audacious," was the general remark of those present. "Mylitta is the daughter of our host, whom he has never seen before until to-day."

The host himself, Nicephorus, seemed rather nettled at the freedom of the young man, and turning round to some of his friends, expressed his regret at the liberty which had been taken with his family.

"On what right, my young friend," he inquired, advancing towards Agathon, "do you presume to throw your wine for the love of my daughter?"

"On the right," replied Agathon, "of a previous acquaintance."

There was a general stare at this answer, delivered as it was with freedom and coolness. But before the spectators had time to recover from their astonishment, Agathon had hurled his wine, and so dexterously that the whole contents of his cup fell plumb into the silver vessel and sank it to the bottom of the water.

The excellence of the cast was the theme for much applause from the other players and spectators, but the omen which the successful throw contained seemed very unacceptable to Nicephorus and his relations, while the exaction of the immediate prize in the shape of a salute appeared out of the question either in the soliciting or the granting.

Nevertheless Agathon, as if determined to insist on his right to the uttermost, looked round with the same easy nonchalance which he had formerly shown, and said in a loud voice, "In obedience to the rules of the game, I stand here awaiting my priceless prize, though whether my duty is to advance and take it myself or to remain here and receive it, I am in ignorance, having never been so fortunate as to win before."

On appeal to those learned in the etiquette of the cottabos, the method was ascertained as more usual that the maiden should be brought and submitted to the ordeal rather than that the youth should go to seek it.

"But reflect, young man," said Democedes, an old and venerable friend of the family, "that you are committing a breach of manners, in fact a flagrant outrage, against your host, which cannot be suffered to end in the mere drollery with which it began. You have never

seen the maiden before; you are an entire stranger to the family, except in so far as the accidental introduction which has brought you here."

"These topics," replied Agathon, "I am unwilling to discuss with you. I have a previous acquaintance with the lady, as I have already told you, and, besides, the laws of the cottabos transcend the regulations of families. I will receive my prize and take the consequences."

Amid a scene of general confusion and disturbance, a party of young men proceeded to the other end of the room, and communicating the stranger's desire to the ladies, offered to escort the trembling sacrifice of the cottabos to her fate at the basin's side; but her mother and sisters undertook the office, and closely veiling their faces, trooped in a weeping procession, like the Trojan women on their way to the temple of Pallas, down the hall with the victim in their midst.

Arrived at last at the side of the basin, they found Nicephorus and others, with faces as black as thunder, disputing with young Agathon still for the prize which he claimed.

"And where could you have seen the lady, sir," inquired Nicephorus angrily, "that you have presumed to make these advances to her, and to exact this unwilling recognition before the very eyes of her parents?"

"On that point I would rather hold my tongue," replied Agathon. "But my claim is none the less valid on that account. I see her here, and hasten to perform the sequel to my success which is allowed me, and then rid you of my presence."

The young Greek girl had been brought down the hall in a mass of veils and light drapery, her form and face entirely concealed by the clouds of gauze and lace around her. She was relieved of much of this superfluous tapestry, and like some precious jewel being unwrapped from a ball of wool, her face at last peeped out, the only smiling one amid the black and lowering visages around her.

Agathon, with an impulsive motion, clasped her suddenly to his breast and kissed her passionately. The mother and sisters standing at the back screamed at this profanation of their race; the father and his friends leant forward to draw off the cottabos conqueror from the fair prize he had so determinedly won; but the circumstance was over in a moment, and before there could be any interference, Agathon had released his fair victim from his embrace and disappeared from the company and from the hall.

"Now, Mylitta," said Nicephorus, "now that my house has been made the scene of a breach of manners such as might not be found again in all Athens, tell me where you have seen this youth and made his acquaintance, who so confidently appeals to a previous friendship for this privilege? Had it not been for his strenuous assertion of that, I should certainly have refused his reward."

"Alas, father," replied Mylitta, blushing and preparing to resume her canopy of gauze, "I have never seen him before; never seen him until this minute."

II.

THE same evening Mylitta found a letter mysteriously conveyed into her hand by one of the slaves of her father's household. Waiting a moment of privacy to read it, she found it written in these terms: "From the cottabos-player, Agathon, to the fairest maid in Greece. Forgive me that I used the innocent fraud which I employed to obtain an introduction to your acquaintance, and to sanctify the affection which I feel by the words I whispered through your trembling lips. Though we have not seen one another before to-day, we are friends henceforth and for ever. Forget me not. I have mortally affronted your family by the action of this morning and cannot see you by any ordinary means, but shall watch my opportunity of doing so. Have I been too bold, maiden? Oh, say not so. But since with you rests the final word on such a matter, I pray you to say it. Fearless and unabashed before any company of men or of people, I am timid and a craven in your presence. Apollo knows how my heart beat and my senses swam when you stood before me in your robe of white, and it was my duty, my privilege, to salute your lips. I therefore ask you to tell me whether my addresses are pleasing to you, whether I shall go on, in spite of all obstacles, to win you, or whether I shall desist because you slight and despise me. I will watch your window to-morrow morning, which I know lies above the cottabos hall. If you are propitious to my suit, have hanging there a white kerchief. If you resent it, a black, and I will never trouble you more. But, oh, may sweet Venus keep you from such unkindness as to scorn me! Let me but know that thy love is mine, and I will swear before all the gods in Olympus that the day shall soon come when I will call thee my own."

Mylitta, who was amazed at the boldness of the young man in the cottabos hall, was equally touched by his timidity and almost maiden submissiveness at present. By thinking all day long over the unexpected incident which had first brought her before the gaze of a large number of people—for, up till this time, she had been confined exclusively to the gynæceion or women's quarter of the house, and indeed the present was her first introduction to male society—all these things concurred to raise romantic notions in her mind, and even before she had received the letter, she had fallen frantically in love with the young Athenian who was so venturesome as to make her acquaintance in the extraordinary way he had chosen.

Her deliberation, if she used any, was not long in coming to a completion. She felt, like many girls at the first sight of their future lover, that she could not exist without him, that the whole of her

happiness was wrapped up in his companionship and his love. She was sorry that he had not asked her for some sign such as waving her hand or showing her face at the window, and vowed in her youthful enthusiasm that she would have sat up all night to show him so cheering a signal, and that the sun would never have risen over a happier figure than hers at her casement in the morning. But, alas, he had been too timid in his requests, and days must elapse, perhaps weeks, before she would see him again. The prospect was not a pleasant one.

Her room lay over the cottabos chamber. She retired late to rest, after having read the happy letter again and again, and having passed the remainder of the evening in wandering about the garden at the back of her father's house, where the olive trees with their pale yellow flowers, the melodious notes of the nightingale, and the moonlight pouring down over all, were in affinity with her happy and love-struck spirit. She spent she knew not how long there. When she retired to rest, she selected from her wardrobe of gauzes and veils the very whitest of them all, and hanging it out of her window sat a while absorbed in the pleasantest of reveries before she sought repose—a reverie, which told her that now from this moment, and from this sign she had given, which, as soon as morn arose, would be seen by her lover, she was entering on a new life of perfect felicity in which alone she could be said to live, because in it she would love. Before she closed her eyes, she wished to read over the letter again. To her disappointment and alarm she could not find it; but her alarm disappeared when she reflected that if she had dropped it in the garden, no one would see it there, as no one entered the garden after dark but herself and she could search for it at sunrise. While if it were accidentally mislaid in her room, she would be sure to find it on a careful search.

She slept a celestial sleep, full of dreams about Agathon and the rosiest of hopes respecting an unknown but happy future. When she woke it was broad daylight. The birds were twittering on the trees in the garden and the sun was streaming in at the windows.

* * * * *

Almost simultaneously with her awakening from slumber, Agathon entered a copse or thicket above the road a short way off the gardens of the house to look for the appointed signal. He too had passed the night in an ecstasy of hope and joy; but his joy was tempered with suspense, for he knew not what answer Mylitta might give him. Still his sight of her smiling face in the cottabos hall, the language of her eyes, and, above all, her sweet and winning manner had told him plainly enough that there was nothing to fear. He came with eagerness to the rendezvous, and stood in the coppice rubbing his eyes to prove if what he saw was true. A black kerchief of large and forbidding dimensions waved from the window of Mylitta, and with its every flutter in the wind brought new pain to the heart of her unhappy lover without, who, fearing that he had presumed too much or that

he had been over hasty in his communication with her, saw his doom denounced with feelings vacillating between anger and sorrow. He knew not whether to be more enraged at himself for placing the verdict so completely in her power and subjecting himself as a laughing-stock to her family, or to be grieved at the brutality of the signal which she had so eagerly given him. The kerchief which he had suggested was replaced by an enormous quilt or coverlet, which waved like some great banner from her window and gave him with tenfold emphasis the news that nothing was to be hoped for more. Turning on his heel with suppressed emotion he walked away hastily towards Colonus, an outlying suburb of Athens, never turning his head to look on the ill-omened mansion again, and promising himself to endeavour to forget the ungenerous girl who had enthralled his affections so violently, but fortunately also for so short a period.

III.

NICEPHORUS afterwards explained to his daughter the trick that had been played on her, how the letter had been found in the garden, and the black cloth substituted for the white. The sudden discovery in the morning had produced, however, a severe and unexpected shock on the health and spirits of Mylitta. A young girl accustomed to the quiet seclusion of the female gynæceion, where the face of a man was never seen, and where the mention of such a being's existence was rigidly tabooed by the laws of Greek etiquette, she had been suddenly and romantically introduced to a splendid specimen of the opposite sex, had felt the warmth of his passionate salute, and had received a declaration of love, an emotion she had often dreamed about, and by constant dreaming had come to yearn for and revere. All the fair fancies which she had built on the single but striking episode of her existence were dashed and destroyed by a cruel, a heartless trick. In her bitterness she upbraided her father and her mother for the deception of which she had been made a victim: her first emotion passed away in an outburst of anger. But her nature was too gentle long to retain feelings of this kind. She sank into a profound, a settled melancholy, from which nothing could rouse her, her thoughts constantly returning to the fraud which had been played upon her lover, and questioning themselves what opinion he would entertain of it.

Nicephorus, in great distress at the condition of his daughter, bemoaned the unlucky idea which had occurred to him for the purpose of driving away the strange suitor of the maiden. "Would to Cybele," he exclaimed to his wife, "that the young man had been tolerated, and even that he had paid his addresses to the girl, rather than that such a climax as this should be the end of the affair."

In consulting the leech, Epimenides, he was aware that not much

good would accrue from his prescriptions. The Greek physicians, at least, by the time of the Persian wars, had not got much beyond the condition of skill mentioned in Homer, which consisted in two invariable prescriptions, a plaster of leaves to lay on the body, and a mash of cheese, herbs, and wine to be taken internally. As Mylitta was neither a wounded warrior nor an overworked horse, Greek physic was not likely to suit her. Nicephorus was therefore agreeably relieved when the leech, after hearing the symptoms and seeing the maiden, recommended a change of scene and occupation as the only cure, and suggested a voyage on the *Ægean* as the most natural and efficacious form of such a change.

The girl herself was not averse to the journey. Her father was overjoyed at the prospect of her amendment. A small pleasure-yacht was hired out of the numerous vessels of such a class which were to be had in the harbours of the gay town of Athens; and, accompanied by her father, her mother, and some others of her family, Mylitta went on board, and, when far out among the blue waves of the *Ægean*, expressed herself, for the first time for many a long day, supremely happy and content.

They stood far out to sea, and the next day were sailing among the Cyclades, whose white chalk cliffs and the foaming sea that ran round them were visions of beauty on the blue waters. The girl's interest was powerfully aroused in the new world she saw around her. She inquired particularly the news of Naxos, where vine leaves hung down the side of the rocks, and grapes were reflected in the waters below. She gazed with rapture at the splintery peaks of Paros, whose white and crystalline marble shone like silver under the midday sun. Sombre Seriphos excited her awe; Delos, which was seen at early sunrise, with the sun rising in full glory above the hills behind, awoke her veneration.

The voyage was pleasant. The girl was forgetting her troubles, her parents were fast losing their anxieties on her account, when—it was behind Delos that the vessel lay—a Milesian pirate dashed out from some unconsidered nook among the cliffs, and, ere the crew of the pleasure-boat recovered from their astonishment, they were all prisoners, and the vessel in the hands of the buccaneers. The pirates, who came crowding on deck, were a desperate-looking gang, under the command of Captain Lysicrates, a young and effeminate-looking man who, as so often with the Greeks of that day, practised this profession as an honourable source of livelihood. It was no uncommon thing, for instance, for depredators of this class to be in connection with the merchant princes of maritime towns, and to bear their prizes in open triumph to open dock at Miletus, Ephesus, or wherever else it might be, and sell the wares, human and otherwise, by public auction. More particularly was this the case if hostilities prevailed between the two countries, as happened to be between Athens and Miletus at the present moment. Such was the destiny which in a

moment might overcloud a scene of joy, and which had swooped down unexpectedly on Nicephorus and his party.

Lysicrates embarked all the occupants of the yacht on board the pirate, and, ordering the former vessel to be taken in tow, commanded all sail to be made in the direction of Miletus, which it was important should be reached as soon as possible, before any Athenian vessels might heave in sight. He was a callous, indifferent young Greek of the Alcibiades type, a thorough dandy and full-blown with egotism and conceit. The position of entire supremacy in which he was now placed over the lives, persons, and property of his captives filled him with unusual hauteur and arrogance. He ordered old Nicephorus and his family before him, and, after a profusion of insulting expressions, asked him what he meant by travelling without a cargo.

"Had I known you had so little on board," exclaimed Lysicrates, "I would never have taken the trouble or consented to run the risk of making a capture."

"Alas," said Nicephorus in reply, "I am travelling on no trading expedition, good sir, but for the health of my daughter here, who is grievously sick and has been recommended this voyage for her benefit. Little did I expect whom I should meet," added the old man, waxing warm as he proceeded, "or I would have taken care to supply myself with guards who should have taught you a lesson for your uncivil behaviour and illegal raid on our vessel."

"Cease your insolence, old man," replied Lysicrates. "Now that I have got you, do not think I shall let you go, or that this is some trifling adventure into which you have fallen, that you can insult your superior with impunity. I am running with you all to Miletus, where you shall be sold as slaves. Ransom yourselves as you please thereafter; I have only to do with the first sale and the money I shall make of you. But with regard to this daughter of yours, her exceeding loveliness has made a deep impression on me, and I propose to reserve her for a more agreeable fate than the slave-market of Miletus. When I disembark you, she will remain with me. To this fate I devote her, not only for the sake of my own happiness, but to teach you manners, you old and reverend varlet, who ought to know better than insult those whom the gods in their goodness have placed in authority over you."

The expostulations and prayers of Nicephorus and his family were of no avail. The arrogance of the captain and his determination were increased rather than diminished by their entreaties to the contrary. With the greatest difficulty did Nicephorus prevent him from tearing the girl from the arms of her mother before the voyage was over, and obtained the slight and ungraciously granted favour that she should not be parted from her parents until Miletus was reached, and separation, a first and final one, became necessary. As Miletus was only one day's sail distant now, the minds of both her parents were filled with anxious forebodings, not for their own fate, which they

lightly esteemed since ransom would not be difficult to procure which would yield them their home and their liberty once more, but for the horrible catastrophe impending over Mylitta, which nothing seemed able to avert. The captain, with a lofty affectation of dignity, declared that the most priceless ransom should never redeem Mylitta, and rejected with scorn the enormous fortune of Nicephorus, the whole of which the latter offered for his child, not perhaps because he would have refused it if he had had it placed in his hands, but because he had very rational doubts as to its existence, and was determined not to baulk his pleasures for a chimera.

IV.

THE morning dawned of the day which was to carry them into the port of Miletus. They were still among the islands; but a short distance beyond the horizon lay the town and its harbours, which were to bring about an eternal separation between the Athenian family and their most beloved member, and to consign the latter to a fate infinitely worse than death. They were passing the island of Chios, the last island on their way before Miletus should loom in sight. Its ivy-clad cliffs, on which were turrets often and courts with little parapets surrounding them, glanced in the sunlight, and here and there seemed to be tenanted with parties of gay pleasure-seekers, whose laughter and revelry jarred sadly on the hearts of the poor unfortunates who were being borne into base and unexpected captivity. One party in particular the sorrowful group noticed, who were seated low down among the cliffs, on a little platform of marble, with balustrades running round it, which led by a flight of stone or stucco steps to the blue sea beneath. They were a party of young men who sat drinking wine under the glowing sun of that Grecian morning, careless of all thoughts but those of their pleasures. From their manners as they reclined with the flagons before them, they were toasting now the gods, now their loves, drinking and pouring libations alternately.

The vessel sailed so close to the island hereabouts—the water being deep right up to the rocks—that the top of the masts were almost on a level with the terrace, and the vessel attracted the notice of the gay dreamers who sat there drinking their wine and whiling away the mild hours of the morning.

"'Tis the vessel of our good friend Lysicrates," exclaimed one of the young men. "Has he been pirating or has he been trading? Whichever it be, let us invite him up here to join us in the wine-cup for a short hour, before he returns to Miletus." And leaning their heads over the balustrade of the court they called out the name of Lysicrates, bidding him to put to the vessel at the stairs and ascend.

"Rather do you come down to me," responded Lysicrates, calling up to them. "I am somewhat peculiarly circumstanced at present and cannot leave my vessel. I will lay to, and you can step back again into the island when our congratulations are over, or you can come a voyage with me to Miletus."

"A voyage!" exclaimed the others, laughing as they descended the stone stairs; and added to one another, "he has been at his pirating tricks again, depend upon it, and has got his vessel laden with priceless stuffs or some such article of value, which he is afraid to leave. Else he would have been upstairs in a twinkling, and saved us the trouble of descending."

They reached the bottom, and stepped from the stairs into the vessel, and going up to Lysicrates in a laughing group, one of them saluted him.

"Our dear old companion of the dice and the wine-bowl, we came to a conclusion as we descended of your unwillingness to mount. What precious argosy hast thou denuded of its contents, and transferred the whole of its stuffs, metals and merchandise, to the hold of the *Vulture*?"

"Or is it a treasure ship travelling from Athens that thou has captured, and do drachmas and minæ lie in thy cabins as thick as olives in an oil ship?"

"Neither, alas, my dear companions," replied Lysicrates with a shrug of his shoulders. "I have been so unfortunate as to capture only a wretched Athenian pleasure yawl, which I have left a couple of sailors in to bring on to Chios: and a party of wretched Athenians, from whom I expect very little in the shape of price, since they are at present a drug in the market, owing to the recent peace. However, to make amends for the poorness of the family, there is a daughter—a paragon of beauty and of grace—whom I have reserved out of the spoil for my own special delectation. I shall make her my wife of course," added he, curling in an arrogant manner his beard, "one of the numerous wives of Lysicrates, who wait for him at every port, and sail with him on every vessel. 'Fore Bacchus, she is an Olympian goddess. I would not part with her for the universe."

"What is she like?" exclaimed the young men, as they seated themselves round the table on deck, where wine was served by a slave.

"She is tall," replied Lysicrates, "but first, my Chian comrades, you must pledge her. The health of the beautiful unknown, and may Lysicrates be happy!"

They all drank the toast with enthusiasm, and Lysicrates continued his description.

"She has brown hair."

"A second point of beauty," they all remarked.

"Her eyes are dark blue, divinely blue, like two drops of the Ægean suddenly petrified, with all their melting blueness in them."

"You are becoming poetical, Lysicrates," remarked one of the young men.

"No wonder that I am," replied Lysicrates, "over such a paragon of endless beauty. Her lips—her chin—her figure"—here he proceeded to give minute details of personal loveliness, which characterised the young woman more graphically. As these proceeded suddenly one of the youths sprang up from the table with a shout, and cried in an agitated manner:

"I should like to see this peerless beauty, Lysicrates. If she is good enough to talk about, she is good enough to exhibit. Can you not bring her on deck, and let us see if all you say of her is true. By Apollo, you expect too much of us, to take your word in such a matter without a shade of proof."

"I can very easily order her to be brought," replied Lysicrates. "You shall see for yourselves, gentlemen. If I have spoken a shadow of any untruth, I will forfeit her."

At his command, the sailors fetched up to deck Nicephorus' family with Mylitta among them, who had all been despatched below, in view of clearing the deck for the captain's guests. Agathon, for he was the young man so eager to verify his conjectures, stood in the presence of Mylitta. * Mylitta saw before her her long-lost lover. Nicephorus saw the mysterious guest of the cottabos-party who had passed the insult, as he termed it, on his child, and who had been indirectly the cause of the present danger and misfortune.

V.

THE recognition was mutual, and did not escape the keen eye of the Milesian captain.

"You have seen this maiden—you knew her—before!" he exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes," said Agathon. "I have met her before in Athens. I know—that is, I know by sight," he was about to add, "her father," but the imploring look on Nicephorus' face checked him from making any allusion to the incidents of the party, and urged him to use his best energies towards the liberation of the maiden, if by any means such were possible. "As friends of mine," said Agathon, turning to Lysicrates, "I hope you will release them."

Lysicrates' only reply was a long whistle. "Friendship is well," he said, "but trade is better. I purpose to sell this family at Miletus. They are the only profits on my voyage."

"But Nicephorus' wealth," urged Agathon, "is perfectly able to pay a vast ransom."

"That I shall know when I see it," replied the captain.

"I would offer all I possess to ransom him on the spot——"

"If you were quite sure of all you tell me about his wealth what is the good of yours?" rejoined Lysicrates with a sneer.

"If I did not hold it in reserve to ransom his daughter, whose immediate release is of more importance than his. He will be perfectly able to redeem himself when he sets foot in Miletus. But the maiden must be ransomed now."

"Must be!" exclaimed the Milesian captain with an expression of arrogant surprise. "These are fine terms to talk to me in. And know this, O Agathon, that not for all your property and all your Chian villas will I liberate this maiden. She is mine by the rights of war—mine by fair and honest capture—and I choose to keep her."

"Then accept my challenge to single combat at once!" cried the young Greek, throwing off his mantle and advancing with drawn sword to attack Lysicrates.

"I shall not do that either," responded Lysicrates contemptuously, as half-a-dozen sailors and some of Agathon's friends ranged themselves between the combatants. "I have no wish to stain my blade with the blood of the man who has just drunk wine with me."

These last words brought a blush to the cheeks of Agathon, who recollected the impiety he was about to commit and seemed to seek some other means for the acquirement of his aim.

"Then I will play you for her," he said, "if I cannot fight you for her. I will stake on one side all my houses and lands in Chios. You shall stake on the other the maiden."

"That idea is not so bad," said the captain, with a laugh. "I should enjoy the maiden's company all the more if I had your lands and houses into the bargain. Come, I will play you, and for the stakes you name."

"What shall the game be?"

"Anything you will—dice, draughts, cottabos, quails——"

"Cottabos, cottabos!" rang out from all the Chians and the sailors around. "Let it be cottabos!"

"Ay!" said some of the sailors. "Let it be. Our captain is a rare dab at that. It will take all that Chian gentleman knows to throw within yards of him."

The statement of the wagers was drawn up in writing and attested by witnesses, Agathon on his side staking his whole property in Chios, and Lysicrates staking the maiden. The game was to consist of six throws apiece, and the conqueror of the greatest number was to receive the prize forthwith. Should both throw an equal number, the contest was to be resumed and to continue until the desired majority of casts should be reached by one or the other.

The deck was cleared for the operations of the game, and lay out shining beneath the morning sun as if inviting so noble a contention upon it. An immense tarpaulin filled with sea-water served for the alabaster basin of the usual game, and floating in it as the vessel for sinking was a silvery scallop-shell from one of the large shell-fish of the Mediterranean. The cups in which the party had been drinking

immediately before served to hold the wine. A chalk line was drawn on deck, and everything was ready.

It was an anxious moment for Nicephorus and his family—most anxious for the pale and frightened Mylitta, whose face looked up to Agathon with the same sweet and yearning aspect which he so well remembered. Agathon, on his side, could not but regard the prospect of the contest with feelings of more than ordinary dismay. If he missed his throw he lost all the property he possessed; he left the ship a beggar, and saw his beloved Mylitta consigned to the base possession of Lysicrates. On the other hand, if he won, intoxicating happiness was at his command. His hand trembled as he poured out the wine into the cup for the first cast. His friend Eunemon saw it, and grasped him tightly by the arm.

"Do not be apprehensive of the result," he said. "Your nerves must not fail you. Believe me, Lysicrates cannot equal you in skill as a player. The only thing he has in his favour is habituation to the motion of the vessel. He is accustomed to playing at sea; you are not. But for this one thing——"

"That is the very thing I dread," replied Agathon; "the one point in his favour which may be my ruin."

"Be of good cheer," whispered Eunemon. "I have already corrupted two of the sailors to let fall the anchor without their captain's orders under pretence of securing a quiet deck for the game, and I go to see that my orders are executed. Do you play fearlessly. We all wish you success." So saying, he disappeared round the raised cabin at the back.

Lysicrates had the first cast. His wine described a splendid circle in the air and fell splash into the scallop-shell, immediately sinking it. Agathon was to throw next. His knees knocked together with very nervousness. The rocking of the vessel, comparatively slight though it was, seemed sadly to disconcert him. He threw. His wine fell in the salt water and partly on the deck, leaving the scallop-shell quite dry.

"Number one for me!" ejaculated Lysicrates, with a sneer. "I shall dispossess you, my Chian, of lands and beauty before a few moments are over."

They threw again. Lysicrates sank the vessel. Agathon missed. There were murmurs of compassion among the onlookers. A third time they threw. Again did Lysicrates succeed. Again did the wine of Agathon scatter in a shower of spray on the white deck of the schooner.

By the laws of the game the stakes went irrevocably to Lysicrates if he won his next cast. He would then have made four throws out of six, Agathon, owing to his previous failures, being unable to score more than three now, even if good luck attended him to the end.

Lysicrates prepared to cast. It was a terrible moment of suspense. If the wine in that cup went true to its mark, as all the others had

gone before it, then, without the possibility of redemption, Agathon's estates and his beautiful lover went to the possession of the Milesian captain.

All of a sudden a terrible shock was felt through the vessel, accompanied by the running of a chain for a few instants. In a moment again all was still. The deck of the galley was as firm as dry land. Everyone knew that the sound they had heard was the anchor being dropped.

"May Pluto confound those officious knaves who have interfered with my seamanship!" exclaimed the captain, whose wine, as he held it in his hand before throwing, was all spilt on the deck around him through the violence of the shock. "I gave no orders to cast anchor. I will hang the rascals who let it go."

"But we cannot stop the game for their execution, Lysicrates, nor can we stand paltering here while you raise the anchor again!" exclaimed Agathon, who was now lifted from the depths of despair and agitation to the seventh heaven of hope. "Proceed with your cast, and raise the anchor when the game is over."

Whether it were from his fury at the maladroitness of the sailors or from the sudden change in the centre of gravity, the cup in Lysicrates' hand became unsteady, and he missed his next cast entirely. Agathon, on the contrary, won, and gained the remaining three of the six, while Lysicrates lost all. They were now equal, and were to resume a new hand of six agreeably to the laws of the game. Of these casts Agathon won the first four straight off, lost the fifth, and won the sixth. Lysicrates won three out of five, and on Agathon's being successful in the last cast, retired from the contest beaten and mortified.

Mylitta became the prize of the successful cottabos-player. A heavy ransom, which was paid on the spot by Agathon, set Nicephorus and his family free. Eunemon, the main cause of the happy result, since his dexterity had achieved the dropping of the anchor, invited the joyous party to his court above on the cliff, and would have included Lysicrates in his invitation had not that much-chagrined gambler been employed in raising the anchor and projecting a chastisement on the seamen who were concerned in the circumstance.

They ascended the stairs once more, and as they ascended, saw the vessel set sail on its voyage to Miletus, while they sat in the marble court overlooking the sea, a happy party, full of merriment. The tale of the cottabos was told to the friends of Agathon by Nicephorus with various additions and decorations as suited his fancy, and the second game of the cottabos had been witnessed by them. They therefore drank to the health of Mylitta, coupling with her name that of Mercury, the patron deity of the cottabos, who had interfered so benignly to rescue her from her enemies by the self-same means which he had used to introduce her to her lover.

AN UNNOTICED WELSH INDUSTRY.

A GREAT deal is being written in the Welsh papers just now on the subject of Welsh industries, and it is understood that a serious effort is to be made, by means of such great names as the Duke of Westminster and the Marquis of Bute, to draw the attention of the outside world to their picturesque qualities and undeniable claims. It seems to me, however, that there is one Welsh industry—though I am not certain whether it may not be more properly described as a pastime than as an industry—which is in some danger of being passed over unnoticed, but which nevertheless has been developed among the mining villages of Glamorganshire in a manner at once extensive and peculiar—I mean the fine art of Begging.

My mind was first seriously drawn to the study of this subject by my experiences in one of the Welsh mining towns during the late unfortunate coal strike. Beggars innumerable called at my house at all hours of the day. Many of these were ordinary beggars of the crudest kind, who took a simple denial and went away. Others, however, were of a higher order. They came armed with books, ruled with cash columns, and insisted on an interview, and these I was soon able to sort out into types and deal with accordingly. I confess that the type which irritated me most was the woman who wanted to bury her baby. She always came accompanied by another, who acted as spokeswoman.

"She wants to bury her baby," the spokeswoman would say, producing the inevitable book. "Mr. Jones has given a shilling, and Dr. Rees half-a-crown. We thought you would like to give something."

At first I was sympathetic, but so many of the type called that the well-spring of my sympathy got dried up, and at last one day, in the hardness of my heart, I said :

"If you can't bury the baby, I am sorry, but the parish will bury it for you, and it is far better that you should let the parish do it than come begging from your neighbours."

They went away in deep indignation, but a moment after they returned again.

"We thought we would tell you, sir," said the spokeswoman, "that it isn't the coffin we're wanting—we have enough for the coffin—what we're collecting for now is the trimmings."

"Trimmings!" said I, myself indignant this time. "Hundreds of people about here are starving, and you come collecting for trimmings for a coffin. Get out of the house. Go away."

"Indeed, sir," said the spokeswoman, shaking her head and finger at me at the same time, "I hope that when you come to die *you* will be buried without any trimmings."

"I hope so too," said I, and they retired with mutterings.

After the strike I became so impressed at the number of pretexts found for these begging visits that I began to make inquiries among my friends and acquaintances. Amongst others I talked with a well-known tradesman in the Rhondda.

"It is perfectly true what you say," said he, "and I myself put it down to the chapels. These are always organising a collection for something or other, a new harmonium, or a school treat, a testimonial, a bazaar, or an Eisteddfod. They send out an army of collectors with books, and so the people get used to the idea. From this it is only a step for them to go out collecting for each other. A common thing is for them to organise a raffle on behalf of a friend who has been ill. They get out tickets and force them on everybody they know. I have a whole drawerful of them. I have to buy them so as not to offend my customers."

He opened the drawer and gave me a few at random. One announced that a "prize drawing would be held for the benefit of Morgan Rees, 6, Nantygwenneth Street, who had been laid up with illness for a long time." Twelve prizes had been contributed, ranging from a "gent's silver watch" to a ham, and the tickets were sixpence each. Another card proclaimed "the disposal by way of chance of a pair of oil paintings, the property of David Thomas, of Tramroadside, who has been unable through illness to follow his employment." A third "grand prize drawing" was "in aid of the 'Ant' Friendly Society, held at the Cardigan Arms, which has been unfortunate in losing £500 by the Liberator crash." Here the prizes, all contributed by long-suffering tradesmen, were twenty-three in number, and comprised a watch, a silk umbrella, and a bottle of whisky.

"From this you will see," said my friend, "that it is a very easy step for them to go out collecting for their own families. This often happens when someone dies, indeed, very often when no one has died. My wife is of a philanthropic turn of mind, and is a district visitor. The other day a woman came to her and told a most plaintive tale of the death of her husband and the destitution of her family. As my wife had not heard of the people before, she said that she must make inquiries, and promised to call that afternoon at four o'clock. When she called there sure enough was the weeping family, and stretched out in the bedroom adjoining the kitchen, under a clean linen sheet, was what she took to be the mortal remains of the defunct husband. The family inquired if she would like to see the corpse, but she disclaimed any such idea, and, having intimated that she would make further inquiries, departed. They seemed very disappointed, but my wife in her own home had been

trained by a local branch of the Charity Organisation Society. This time she felt she was perhaps acting too hardly, and, after going a few yards, retraced her steps to give them a few shillings for their immediate needs. What was her astonishment on re-entering the house to find the corpse sitting up in bed loudly protesting in Welsh against the stinginess of the age.

"The final stage," continued my informant, "is when they come out collecting for themselves. The importance which such people attach to the little book which they carry is enormous; indeed, no self-respecting beggar would venture out without one. They seem to think that the possession of a book proves their case.

"'Read what this book says,' say they. 'It's the truth what's written there.'

"In the book you find, written in a hand that you do not know, a statement that John Thomas seems to be a deserving person, and is undoubtedly in great destitution, and consequently a proper object for the charity of the public. They cannot understand how it is that you do not find this convincing.

"I have had many extraordinary appeals made in this way to my generosity," he went on, "but I think the most extraordinary was one day last year. I went into my shop, and saw standing there a hale and hearty-looking young woman, who held out to me what I at once recognised to be a collecting book. The inscription in the book said that Sarah Evans was anxious to buy for herself a cork leg, and was under the necessity of appealing to kind friends in order to enable herself to do so.

"'Are you Sarah Evans yourself?' said I.

"'Yes, sir,' said she.

"Long experience had taught me to be cautious. I remarked, purely in a general spirit of inquiry:

"'How am I to know that you want a cork leg, or any leg at all?'

"I did not mean anything by it, but she looked at me much in the same manner as M. de Rougemont must have looked when the editor asked him to bare his arms, and without saying a word more she turned on her heel—at least what I suppose was her heel—and left the shop. She had a slight limp certainly, but why she wanted a cork leg I can't imagine. I had never seen her in the shop before, I have never seen her there since, and from the way she looked at me I candidly confess that I never expect to see her there again."

Thus far my friend the Rhondda tradesman. For my part I have come to the conclusion that this highly developed begging system is merely a part of one huge game of bluff at which the Welsh nation delights to play. The Welshman by nature has a sombre and lugubrious air. The eloquence of his favourite pulpits sometimes seems drawn from the original fount of woe. When he assumes a deliberately mendicant attitude the profound pathos of his manner,

and the melancholy cooing note which his woman-kind contrive to blend with their high-pitched voices, would melt a heart of stone. The Anglo-Saxon may think there is something degrading in all this, but that is because he lacks the dramatic instinct. During the strike, when half the population of the Merthyr Valley cheerfully came upon the rates and broke unnecessary stones in improvised stone-yards, the inhabitants of an outlying village called Penrheol-Gerrig stood in with the rest for a share of the spoil. It was impossible for the relieving officer to investigate all the cases at once, but when he came to Penrheol-Gerrig he found that the little community possessed quite a herd of cows and pigs, not to speak of a fine collection of domestic fowls. With all the Saxon red-tapery of his office he entered a protest, and said that all these things should first have been sold.

"Sell our cows and fowls!" exclaimed the Penrheol-Gerrigans. "Indeed! There's hard-hearted you are! Why, we are saving these for a rainy day!"

What I particularly admire about the Welshman is that he is never confused when he is found out. With another man it might be an awkward moment, but by some marvellous instinct he contrives to manage the transition from "bluff" to candour in such a way that neither you nor he think any the worse of each other. Indeed, he respects you for having seen through him, and you respect him for having kept his countenance so well. It is this dramatic faculty that makes the Welsh such excellent witnesses. (I am aware that unsympathetic judges have often put this fact another way.) When they have a story to tell they carry it through. If the occasion compels them to lie, they lie with circumstance, nor do they relax their vigilance when they have left the box. They keep it up in view of the jury till the verdict has been given, and indeed even afterwards, when to do so can serve no useful end. It is not that they lie more than other nations: they lie better. No people take a cue better. If in a colliery case it is found necessary to prove some unexpected issue, six men will go into the box, say what is wanted, and stand cross-examination without turning a hair. Of course no harm is done, for six other men can be found with equal readiness on the other side.

The Welsh are a shy and retiring race, and have not forced themselves much on the notice of the world. They have not yet found their J. M. Barrie. When he appears, the world will wonder at the rich mine of local colour that has remained unworked so long.

THE INSECT JEWELS.

BY EDMUND MITCHELL.

"A STORY!"

"Oh, yes—a story!"

"A story, papa, a story!"

The three boys spoke in chorus, and the father, held captive in his easy-chair, had no alternative but to yield ready compliance with the clamorous demand.

"Well, a story let it be, children," he said good-naturedly, taking Eddie on his knee. "Which one shall I tell?"

"Cinderella," suggested Bertie.

"Blunderbore," cried Eddie, who, I am afraid, was particularly fond of tales about monstrous giants and wicked ogres.

"No," interposed Claude reflectively, "we've had these before. Let us have a new story, papa?"

"A new story? About what?" asked the father.

"About little mamma," suggested Claude, looking fondly towards the mother who was seated in the rocking chair at the opposite side of the fireplace, with baby Kathleen on her knee.

The mother smiled, Kathleen crowed, and the other boys took up the proposal with eager delight.

"Yes, yes, a story about little mamma."

So the father, in face of such a unanimous request, had once again to make up his mind to submit with the best grace possible. He took only a minute to gather his thoughts together, and then began:

"Well, children, as I have often told you, mother and father lived in India before you little rogues came upon the worldly scene. Mamma at that time had no small boys and no baby girl to look after, but she had many wee mouths to fill all the same. There were Jacko, the monkey, who lived in a box at one end of the verandah, and Polly, the red-tailed West African parrot, whose cage hung by a chain at the other end, and Tippto Tib, the fox terrier pup, who had been brought up by mamma on condensed milk, which he sucked just like baby over there out of a feeding bottle; and a score of pigeons, who had a pretty dove-cot under the cool shade of a great mango-tree on the lawn outside: and the tame mongoose, who poked in and out of the house just as he chose, coming for dinner when there were no snakes to kill in the thick hedge surrounding the compound. Besides these pets, there were numerous occasional visitors who knew the little mother well and fed plenteously on her bounty—a pair of grey squirrels, who carried off many a crust to their

nest in the gnarled boughs of the mango-tree ; pretty green parakeets, who came in chattering flocks for an occasional banquet of Indian corn ; perky mynah birds, with yellow beaks and snuff-brown feathers, who dearly loved a few grains of sugar by way of a change from insect diet ; even rascally crows in glossy black suits, whose cleverness redeemed in a measure the audacious impudence with which they indulged their thieving propensities, and sometimes honestly earned for them a scrap of meat or a half-picked chicken bone.

"So, you see, mamma, although she had no little lads and no baby girl of her own, had quite a big family to look after. And when she would come out in the morning on to the verandah—a dainty figure, I can assure you, boys, in her cool white muslin frock set off with a bright silk sash of blue or pink—she used, like any queen, to have quite a reception from her furred and feathered friends. The pigeons cooed, a mynah would whistle with soft full note, a crow or two give a harsh but cheerful caw-caw ; the parakeets flew round and round, flashing like jewels in the sunshine, while they screamed a welcome ; the squirrels rubbed their noses with their paws, as if by way of shaking hands ; the mongoose pattered up the steps, a pleasant-looking little chap despite his red nose and rather snaky eyes ; the monkey on all fours ran swiftly along the verandah rail ; Tippto Tib, barking loudly, tumbled head over heels in his eagerness to bite mamma's shoe-strings ; and the grey parrot called out twice, 'Good morning, mem-sahib, good morning, mem-sahib,' and then went off into a prolonged fit of chuckling laughter.

"But besides all these intimate acquaintances, with whom mamma regularly exchanged morning greetings, she had other friends around the bungalow of whose kindly feelings towards her she knew nothing. Tiny house lizards, sweetly pretty in their coats of vivid green as they rustled among the leaves growing over the trellis or darted behind the big red Chinese fan on the verandah wall, knew the little house-mother well, and nodded their wise-looking wee heads in a pleased sort of way when she made her appearance each morning ; handsome, courtly-looking beetles, with armour of gold or greenish-blue or polished jet, peeped at her with friendly interest from beneath the leaves under which they were hiding ; big velvety moths, half asleep under the shady eaves, blinked their eyes and even slightly opened their folded wings to greet her coming ; while richly-coloured, satiny butterflies ceased for a time from their quest of nectar in the flower cups, just for the pleasure of circling around her head and displaying before her their beauties in the sunlight.

"Now it came about one sultry afternoon, that mamma, while trying to read a very dull book as she lay at full length on one of the long cane chairs of the verandah, dropped off into a sound sleep. It further chanced that quite a number of insects had forgathered, and were engaged in friendly conversation on a sweet-scented verberna bush that grew in a big tub close by. Naturally they began to talk

of the dear little lady of the house, who was so kind to all around her, and the sight of whom was gladness to every living creature's eyes.

"She sleeps as sound as a queen bee in the cold season," whispered a yellow-belted honey-seeker.

"And looks as pretty as the prettiest butterfly," said a demoiselle of that race, balancing herself by gently waving her wings of exquisite peacock blue.

"When she comes to open her eyes again they will sparkle like fire-flies in the dusk," murmured a humble-looking individual, who made no pretence to beauty during the day-time.

"I should just like to nestle in her bosom all the days of my life," sighed a beautiful beetle, clothed in a doublet of burnished green.

"That gives me an idea," interposed a big-headed bull-ant, holding himself upright by clinging to a leaf by means of his formidable jaws.

"And what may that be, Mr. Gigantic Intellect?" chirruped a dried-up looking grasshopper, with an impertinent grin.

"Oh, it doesn't affect either you or me, Ugly!" retorted the bull-ant crustily.

"Pray, what is your idea, sir?" asked the butterfly with a gracious smile, addressing the bull-ant and adroitly diverting his attention from the grasshopper's ill-judged pleasantry.

"Well, it's just this way," replied the bull-ant, somewhat mollified by the elegant creature's attention. "Every one of us wishes to give pleasure to the dear little house-mother asleep over there."

"That we do," assented all the insects with one accord.

"Now," resumed the bull-ant, "I know quite well that, while each of us has no doubt his or her good points, some of us aren't very pretty to look at"—with a withering glance towards the shrivelled grasshopper—"nor are others among us just the sort of pets the dear little madam-sahib would care to have about her garments."

"Meaning yourself," interjected the grasshopper sarcastically.

"Precisely, Master Long-legs," replied the bull-ant quietly, and taking no further offence, for a second sweet smile from the charming peacemaker helped him to keep his temper. "However, some amongst us are beyond all doubt beautiful and handsome, like my Lady Butterfly and my noble friend, the Lord Beetle. Now why shouldn't we contrive among us to deck out our little madam-sahib for the ball to-night?"

"What ball?" asked the honey bee.

"Oh, you bees seem always to be too busy to pick up the gossip of the day!" replied the bull-ant, in somewhat lofty tone. "Why, to-night to be sure, there is a great ball at Government House."

"I know," murmured a moth in a half-asleep voice, languidly stretching out his wings of rich tortoiseshell brown. "I know, and I intend to be there."

" 'Well, you might help my plan, Sir Moth,' said the bull-ant, 'but all the same the idea must not be overdone.'

" 'What in the name of goodness is this wonderful idea?' snapped the impatient grasshopper. But the butterfly gave yet another winsome smile, and whispered to the bull-ant to take no notice of the fellow's impertinences.

" 'And how can I help in the matter?' asked the beetle courteously.

" 'As I have said,' replied the bull-ant, 'let us deck out the little madam-sahib for to-night's Government House ball. We all know that she is not very rich, like some other ladies in this city, nor has she expensive ornaments—diamonds and rubies, emeralds and pearls, opals and sapphires—to wear at the Governor's entertainment. But we have amongst us every colour of every precious stone, and why, I ask, should we not to-night contrive to adorn the one we all love so well with insect jewels?'

" 'Bravo! bravo!' piped a score of eager voices.

" 'The idea is certainly a pretty one,' murmured the butterfly.

" 'You, Lady Butterfly,' continued the bull-ant with a courtly yet dignified bow, 'will be a host in yourself. Among other things, I have studied precious stones, and, upon my word, those rows of satin-white spots in the rich peacock blue of your wings would pass for pearls of costly price, while the dots that form the crescents near the tips are just the shade of the true pigeon-blood ruby, and, if I may be permitted to say so, your bright eyes sparkle like diamonds of the finest water.'

" 'The butterfly blushed with pleasure at this appreciation of her splendour and her beauty.

" 'Then you, Sir Moth,' the speaker went on to say, turning to that insect, who, in view of the compliments passing, had now fully spread out his really elegant wings, 'also possess exquisite colouring. You will pass excellently well as an ornament of choicest tortoiseshell set with jewels—those four patches of violet can hardly be distinguished from amethysts, that lustrous velvety spot in the middle of your back will scintillate in the candlelight with all the soft fire of an opal, your wings are embroidered with rich gold, and your eyes have in them the yellow gleam of the topaz.'

" 'Why, my learned friend,' laughed the delighted moth, 'never before did I dream that I was such a good-looking fellow.'

" 'Then,' continued the bull-ant, thoroughly warming to his subject, 'his lordship, the Beetle, will make a finer brooch than was ever turned out of jeweller's shop. His burnished armour will flash in the ball-room green as the emerald, and will change with every change of light to blue and old gold and back again to green. The richest lady in the land could not possess a more exquisite brooch wherewith to secure a dainty spray of flowers.'

" 'My eye! can't he butter!' muttered the attenuated grasshopper

to himself ; but he was afraid to speak his thoughts aloud, for all the other insects were listening with unconcealed admiration to the bull-ant's words.

" ' Lastly, our modest little comrade here,' continued the speaker, indicating by a nod the fire-fly, ' can with the help of a few of his friends make a regular blaze of sparkling gems wherever they are required. Clustered around the butterfly, the lamps of the fire-flies will add a sparkle, if that be possible, to her ladyship's diamond eyes, and will help to show to best advantage the pearls and rubies cushioned on the blue satin of her wings. Her place will naturally be amidst the soft laces on the bosom of little madam's costume, while, as I have indicated, the beetle will be close by, shimmering amidst the delicate flowers and fern-fronds which our loved one invariably wears. The moth, settling on her wavy tresses, will appear to be a flashing bejewelled ornament of tortoiseshell, while a score of fireflies gleaming here and there amidst sunny curls will add to the splendour of her appearance. And that will be what I call decking out the dear little house-mother with insect jewels.'

" Great was the rapture and enthusiasm with which the project was received by the assembly of insects. It was a capital idea of the clever bull-ant each and all agreed. Everyone would help in his or her own way to make the experiment a success ; and, although all could not take an active part in adorning her whom they agreed to honour, not one but would feel joy in the knowledge that at the Governor's ball the little madam-sahib would be made prettier than ever, all unbeknown to herself, by the radiance of living insect gems.

" So those who were to play the leading rôles hurried away to perfect their toilets—the butterfly to freshly powder her wings, the moth to smooth the velvet pile of his coat, the beetle to burnish his bright armour, and the fire-fly flew off to seek his friends, and have all the glow-lamps trimmed and ready for the ball.

" And the parrot smiled benignly, the monkey grinned with huge delight, the puppy dog fairly shook with suppressed excitement ; for all three had listened to the conversation of the insects, and appreciated the pleasant surprise in store for the sweet little house-mother and her friends. And one of the pigeons, who had been an eavesdropper on the verandah-rail, carried the news to the dove-cot ; and the squirrels heard it from the doves, and then told it to the parakeets, and the parakeets passed it on to the crows. So, straightway, there was such a cawing, and a screaming, and a chattering, and a cooing of pleasure, that little mamma woke up on her long chair with a start. Tippo Tib barked and snapped at her shoe-strings, Jacko sidled up and put a hairy paw lovingly on her hand, and Polly shrieked, ' This way for the Governor's ball,' and then tumbled off his perch in a paroxysm of hilarity.

" That night quite a throng of insects hovered round the verandah to watch little mamma's departure for the Government House ball.

Butterflies and dragon-flies that should have been in bed hours before, winged beetles of all sizes and hues, grasshoppers and daddy-long-legs galore, dandy bees and wasps in striped yellow and black jerseys, ants that flew and ants that crawled, buzzing mosquitoes who forgot for the time being their power to torment—all jostled each other in their eagerness to catch sight of little mamma bedecked with living insect jewels.

"At last she came forth in her raiment of shimmering white silk, a gossamer shawl thrown over head and shoulders. And in the dim light of the verandah lamp a thousand gleaming peering insect eyes could just catch the sparkling dazzle of the gemmed butterfly nestled with her fire-fly satellites amidst soft clustering laces, and the sheen of the armoured beetle beneath a spray of orchids and maidenhair ferns; while the glow of other fire-flies among the partly-covered hair sufficed to show that they and the tortoiseshell moth, on which their lamps would presently gleam, were at their posts of duty and ready to play their part in the adornment of dear little mamma at the Government House ball. And in their joy a million cicadas burst into shrill applause from every bush and tree, and the song was carried from grove to grove as the carriage rolled away along the road through the cocoanut palms, bound for the hill by the surf-beaten seashore on which the palace of the Governor stood."

"Is it all true, papa?" interrupted Eddie, whose big blue eyes had been growing rounder and rounder with wonder.

"Wait till you hear the end of my story," replied the father. "Well, boys, I was of course in the carriage that night with little mamma, but I noticed no moth or butterfly, nor fire-flies, nor green-jacketed beetle. And in the vestibule I helped mamma off with her shawl, and led her up the stately marble staircase to make her curtsy to the great lord who was the Governor and the beautiful countess his wife. Then we mingled with the gay throng of ladies arrayed in rich silks and satins and sparkling with jewels, officers wearing uniforms of scarlet and gold with medals and orders gleaming on their breasts, and native princes with turbans and robes that fairly blazed with the flashing fire of a thousand magnificent gems. And when the stringed band began to play, little mamma and I floated away together in the mazy dreamy waltz. But never once did I notice the insect jewels amidst her hair, her laces, and her flowers.

"After the waltz we rested and chatted for a few minutes, and then a dear friend of ours came and claimed the hand of the little mother for a dance.

"And so the night wore on, and only now and then I caught a glimpse of our sweetheart in the crowded ball-room. For I myself danced but seldom, but mamma was sought for by many partners.

"At supper we were seated at the same side of the table, but separated from each other by several people. Immediately after the banquet little mamma was carried off once again to the ball-room. It was for

a set of the lancers, and as this would take a good long time, I slipped out on to the verandah to smoke a cigar. I also wished to be alone; in those days I had many things to think about, for I knew that there was a terrible famine coming to the land, and I felt sad with the forebodings of sorrow and of suffering.

"The band played piece after piece, dance succeeded dance; perhaps an hour passed away. But I remained alone on the verandah, smoking and devising plans for the danger to be fought against, and bestowing hardly a thought on little mamma, for I knew she was passing the time pleasantly enough in the company of our many friends. All at once, however, I heard voices close at hand, and from the sound of a name that fell on my ear I gathered that they were talking about a matter of interest to me. I had no wish to play the eavesdropper, but I could not help hearing what they said.

"'By Jove! did you see her new jewels? That butterfly with the diamond eyes and rows of pearls and crescents of rubies is worth a small fortune,' remarked the first voice.

"'And the tortoiseshell moth in her hair, with its amethysts and topazes, and that lovely opal in the centre, must also have cost a king's ransom,' replied the person addressed.

"'And that enormous emerald in the shape of a beetle fastening her flowers,' continued the first speaker.

"'Not to mention the scores of gems glittering amidst her laces and her hair,' added the other.

"'I never saw such a display before,' said the one.

"'I wonder how her husband can have got them?' mused the other.

"'They may be family treasures to which he has recently fallen heir,' suggested his companion.

"Then I rose to my feet, for up to now I had been fairly chained to my seat by amazed surprise, and I made my presence known. Both men were my friends.

"'You are speaking of me, gentlemen,' I said quietly.

"'Yes, old fellow,' replied the one who had been the chief spokesman in the conversation I had inadvertently overheard, 'and of the truly magnificent jewels your wife is wearing. Let me congratulate you and her on the possession of such treasures.'

"'Has some maharajah poured out at your feet the contents of his gem caskets?' asked my second friend, in good-humoured banter.

"'Gentlemen,' I protested, 'I don't understand a word you are saying.'

"At this very moment little mamma tripped on to the verandah, looking for me who had so long been playing truant from the ball-room, that I might take her home. And there, in the full light of a lamp overhead, I saw, flashing from garments and hair, the blaze of a hundred gems—diamonds and rubies, topazes and amethysts,

opals and pearls and emeralds, of brilliant lustre and blending iridescent hues.

"I stood for a moment in silent bewilderment, but little mamma seemed all unconscious of the splendour of her appearance.

"I stretched out a hand, and with questioning look placed a finger on the gemmed butterfly gleaming on her bosom. But when I touched what I fully thought to be a jewel beyond price, a living insect fluttered its satiny wings and floated away into the darkness of the shrubbery beyond the verandah.

"At the same moment a big beetle, gleaming green like an emerald, shook itself free from her spray of flowers, and with a radiant flash disappeared from view, while a score of fire-flies seemed to dart from among her laces with the shimmer of scattered dewdrops. The last scintillation of a jewel in the corsage of the little mother was gone!

"Then, awakening to the reality of the situation, I gently touched the tortoiseshell moth nestling amidst her wavy hair, and instantly the lovely creature rose on feathery pinions, and with its attendant fire-flies vanished into the blackness of the night.

"But little mamma was smiling, knowing nothing of what had happened.

"‘So you see, my friends,’ I said with a quiet laugh, ‘my inheritance has taken unto itself wings; the gifts of the maharajah were only insect jewels.’

"Little mamma understood nothing of all this; but when I told her the story in the carriage during our homeward drive, she was even more amazed than I myself had been on first beholding her sparkling with the radiance of the living gems. And even now she will not believe my explanation, that the beautiful and loving butterflies and moths, fire-flies and beetles, had plotted together to bedeck her with jewels rich and rare like the greatest lady in the land for that night of the Governor's ball."

"And why doesn't dear little mamma wear butterfly jewels now?" asked Claude.

"Because her babies are jewels enough for her," cried little mamma, with tears glistening in her eyes, as she gathered all four children into her arms in a loving embrace.



THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

YOU are so young, and life is sweet,
 You cannot stand at my side, dear heart ;
 My slow steps baffle your flying feet,
 We are fifty years apart !
 Living for you seems an endless thing,
 Full of glory and light and mirth,
 For me it is only a bygone Spring
 Remembered 'mid Winter's dearth.

Through a glass darkly your youth must gaze,
 Its wondrous colours enchant the eye,
 But you cannot see to the far-off days,
 Nor know where the path will lie.
 Mine is a casement of narrower space,
 But the pane burns bright, like a crystal clear,
 And through it I see, as face to face,
 The Peace that is drawing near.

You slept and smiled 'neath the dawning skies—
 For dreams grow fair when the East's aflame—
 And nearer and nearer towards sunrise
 The wheels of Love's chariot came.
 I waked and mused by my lonely fire,
 On some who have passed through the open door,
 And yearn'd with a passion of strong desire
 For those who return no more !

Hope sings in your ear a ballad gay,
 The sweetest song that was ever sung ;
 You are wandering out on the Primrose way
 That was made when the world was young.
 But I who have drunk Grief's bitter wine,
 And felt the blast of Time's withering breath,
 Am weary for that good land of mine
 Across the River of Death !

Dear and beloved that Country seems
 Where shadows pale in the light of truth ;
 Fairer than even the fairest dreams
 That gladden your radiant youth :
 Soon, very soon, I shall rise and go,
 And you must not sorrow, dear heart, for me,
 For I shall pass out with the Sunset's glow
 Like a bird from a cage set free.

CHRISTIAN BURKE.

